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Intentional over-qualification: An exploration of motives and outcomes

A thesis

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SAMANTHA NEWLAND



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ABSTRACT

The effects of over-qualification (OQ) are becoming more established, yet little is known about the processes which drive these outcomes, or why outcomes are sometimes positive rather than negative. Less is known about different forms of over-qualification, whether they exist, and, whether they make a difference to such outcomes. Drawing on the theory of needs-supplies fit, the current research examined how two distinct forms of over-qualification (intentional and unintentional) relate to life satisfaction, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, turnover intentions, and job performance. Data were collected by means of an online self-report survey. Two hundred and twenty-seven respondents (61% female, 39% male) provided data at one time point. Two distinct forms of over-qualification emerged. Ninety participants were intentionally over-qualified and predominantly chose jobs below their qualifications due to work-life balance considerations (e.g., wanting more time for educational pursuits, family, hobbies, and leisure activities). Eighty-four participants were unintentionally over-qualified (i.e., not over-qualified by choice), and fifty-three participants were not over-qualified. Women reported choosing jobs below their qualifications significantly more often than men, as did individuals below the age of 30 years. Unintentional over-qualification proved to be a more harmful form of over-qualification and was linked to a range of undesirable outcomes. Over-qualified employees should not be mass categorised as they have been in many previous studies. Although unintentional over-qualification should be avoided, the same cannot be said for intentional over-qualification. Over-qualified individuals who choose their

employment situation appear to represent a largely unrecognised, underutilised, and potentially valuable resource for organisations.

Key Words: Over-qualification, intentional OQ, unintentional OQ, needs-supplies fit, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, turnover intentions, organisational commitment, job performance

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, many employers have seen a surge of over-qualified job applicants (Brynin, 2016). Over-qualification occurs when an employee possesses education, work skills, knowledge, abilities, experience, and/or other qualifications that are not required, or fully utilised by their job (Erdogan, Bauer, Peiro & Truxillo, 2011). Over-qualification is prevalent among recent graduates, younger populations (Battu, Belfield & Sloane, 2000; Di Pietro & Urwin, 2006), expatriates (Bolino & Feldman, 2000), immigrants (Aycan & Berry, 1996), older workers (Allan, 1990), employees with disabilities (Bruch, Fallon, Heimberg, & Hansen, 2003), and executives and managers who face re-employment due to role disestablishment (Feldman, Leana, & Bolino, 2002). Research has also shown that the risk of becoming over-qualified has increased in both developed and developing countries (Gorg & Strobl, 2003). A global human resource service company recently reported that forty-seven percent of workers worldwide feel over-qualified for their current job (Randstad-Workmonitor, 2012).

Past over-qualification research has largely been premised on an idea that over-qualified employees are a homogeneous group (Erdogan, Bauer, Peiro & Truxillo, 2011a). Their likeness has been attributed to their lack of volition in determining their work arrangement, or simply put, their lack of choice in having a job for which they are over-qualified. Dominant themes throughout past over-qualification literature are that over-qualification is an unexpected, involuntary, or unintentional employment situation, a situation people find themselves in when adequate employment is unavailable and the only alternative option is to accept a substandard job; or where

adequate employment somehow becomes inadequate as time progresses therefore resulting in perceptions of over-qualification (e.g., work-related tasks become less challenging, fewer opportunities for promotion and advancement are available).

Over-qualification has subsequently been treated as a form of underemployment (Feldman, 1996). Underemployment takes many forms, but is always characterised as an involuntary and unintentional employment situation (Feldman, 1996). Although it is clear why over-qualification has commonly been classified as a form of underemployment, the current research proposed that not all over-qualified employees are underemployed, as some may intentionally choose to work in jobs for which they are over-qualified. This is an uncommon proposal as “to date, no studies have examined whether over-qualification was intentional on the part of employees” (Erdogan et al., 2011a, p. 265) or whether this makes a difference to the outcomes often associated with over-qualification.

Within the present study, a preference for working in a job one is over-qualified for was termed *intentional over-qualification*. Criteria for being classified as intentionally over-qualified were met if participants declared that a) they believed they were over-qualified for their job, b) they were aware of their over-qualified status before accepting their job, and c) they were comfortable with the idea of not having their qualifications fully utilised in their job, prior to accepting it. If participants indicated that they felt over-qualified for their job but did not know they were over-qualified prior to accepting their job, or that they were not comfortable having their qualifications underutilised, they were instead classified as *unintentionally over-qualified*. Unintentional OQ could therefore be considered a new term for what past

research simply called ‘over-qualification’, as the terms are conceptually similar and represent a form of underemployment. Those who felt they were not over-qualified were classified as non-over-qualified (non-OQ). This group likely represents those who feel their employment is adequately matched to their knowledge, skills, abilities, and experience.

After distinguishing between intentional and unintentional over-qualification, this study sought to understand why some people intentionally choose to work in jobs they are over-qualified for. Although there are several possible reasons people may become intentionally over-qualified it was expected that most reasons would relate to the pursuit of increased work-life balance. Work-life balance is an increasing issue among organisations and employees as it plays a significant role in determining satisfaction with life and work (Drobnic & Guillen, 2011). Work-life balance is an individual’s subjective perception of balance between joint commitments to their work and non-work roles (Brough, Timms, O’Driscoll, Kalliath, Siu, Sit, & Lo, 2014). Non-work roles can include personal relationships, health, family responsibilities, volunteer work, sporting commitments, education, religion, and travel commitments. Kalliath and Brough (2008) defined work-life balance as “the individual’s perception that work and non-work activities are compatible and promote growth in accordance with an individual’s current life priorities” (p. 326).

Although some organisations implement initiatives aimed towards making it easier for employees to achieve work-life balance, the responsibility of maintaining this ‘balance’ lays heavily on the individual (Hoffman & Cowan, 2008). If work-life balance is not achieved consequences can include, increased stress, marital tension,

increased difficulty parenting, reduced productivity at work, decreased job satisfaction, lower levels of organisational commitment, and higher rates of absenteeism and turnover (Hobson, Delunas, & Kesic, 2001). Therefore, finding a level of equilibrium between paid employment and other domains of life is important (Drobnic & Guillen, 2011). If an individual wanted, or needed, to exert extra time or energy into their health, leisure, or family domains, accepting a job below their qualifications could seem like a practical or necessary step to take in order to satisfy that need.

Although some people may intentionally choose jobs they are over-qualified for, the effects of this employment decision are unknown. A lot of past research has indicated that the outcomes of hiring over-qualified individuals are undesirable. Outcomes of over-qualification include poor job attitudes (Feldman, Leana & Bolino, 2002; Morrow, Johnson & Johnson 2002), job dissatisfaction (Bolino & Feldman, 2000; Green & Zhu, 2010; Johnson & Johnson, 2000), high turnover intentions, real voluntary turnover behaviour (Maynard & Parfyonova, 2013), lower levels of organisational commitment (Bolino & Feldman, 2000; Feldman, Leana & Bolino, 2002), careerist attitudes (Bolino & Feldman, 2000), counterproductive work behaviour (Luksyte, Spitzmueller & Maynard, 2011), poorer mental health and psychological functioning, (Bolino & Feldman, 2000; Dooley, Prause & Ham-Rowbottom, 2000), and lower levels of life satisfaction (Wilkins, 2007). However, these findings are largely based on research that conceptualised over-qualification as a form of underemployment. Such findings may therefore be more representative of individuals who are unintentionally over-qualified, that is, those who do not choose to

be over-qualified, and are uncomfortable with their over-qualified status.

The aim of the present study was to examine whether intentionally choosing a job below one's qualifications is associated with more beneficial outcomes than unintentional OQ, and whether intentionally choosing a job below one's qualification is associated with similar outcomes as non-OQ. Outcomes assessed were job satisfaction, "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experience" (Osbourne, 2015, p. 175). Life satisfaction, "an overall assessment of feelings and attitudes about one's life at a particular point in time ranging from negative to positive" (George, Chaze, Fuller-Thomson, & Brennenstuhl, 2012, p. 409). Turnover intentions, the degree to which one cognitively prepares to leave or remain at their job (Maynard, Joseph, & Maynard, 2006). Affective organisational commitment, the level of emotional attachment an employee has towards their organisation (Marrow et al., 2002), and overall job performance, a combination of contextual and task performance (Sonnentag, Volmer, & Spychaia, 2008). Age, gender, hours worked per week, education level, and occupational group were also variables of interest in the present research.

This research addressed a significant gap in the over-qualification literature, and is important since over-qualification is a prevalent phenomenon and a significant employment barrier (Erdogan et al., 2011; Thompson, Shea, Sikora, Perrewe & Ferris, 2013). If outcomes are more positive for those who intentionally choose jobs below their qualifications, this would signal that there may be more benefits to hiring certain over-qualified individuals than there are risks. Specifically, employing intentionally over-qualified individuals who have more knowledge, skills, abilities, experience, and

other qualifications than their job requires could provide organisations with a competitive advantage (Erdogan et al., 2011a). Such knowledge could not only help employers make more informed hiring decisions, but could also help many over-qualified job applicants gain employment for which they may have been otherwise overlooked. Overall, this research has the potential to change the way over-qualification is conceptualised by both employers and academics.

Different Forms of Over-Qualification

Although no direct research has been conducted, a handful of researchers have proposed that over-qualified individuals are a heterogeneous group, and that distinct forms of over-qualification do exist. Perrewe, Halbesleben, Rosen and Ebrary (2012) refer to this distinction as ‘subpopulations’. Thompson, Shea, Sikora, Perrewe, and Ferris (2013) refer to this distinction as ‘voluntary or involuntary underemployment’. Maltarich, Reilly and Nyberg (2011) refer to this distinction as ‘intentional mismatch’ or ‘intentional cognitive over-qualification’ (Maltarich, Nyberg, & Reilly, 2010), and Erdogan, Bauer, Peiro and Truxillo (2011) refer to this distinction as ‘apparent vs. emergent over-qualification’.

Perrewe, Halbesleben, Rosen and Ebrary (2012) believe that subpopulations exist among employees who are over-qualified for their jobs. They note that different forms of over-qualification could relate to different employee profiles (e.g., education, organisational tenure, family responsibility), and that these employee profiles could either directly or indirectly predict critical outcome variables (e.g., job satisfaction, turnover). Erdogan et al., (2011) also believes that subpopulations could exist among those who are over-qualified. Erdogan et al., (2011) differentiated two forms of over-

qualification: apparent over-qualification and emergent over-qualification. Apparent over-qualification is said to occur when a job applicant applies for a job they know they are over-qualified for. The employee therefore enters into the employment arrangement fully aware of the situation (Erdogan et al., 2011). On the other hand, a job candidate may be unaware that they are over-qualified, with perceptions of over-qualification only emerging after being hired; this is termed emergent over-qualification (Erdogan et al., 2011).

The present study expanded upon these forms of over-qualification. Intentional OQ is not only ‘apparent’ (i.e., known to the individual before applying for a job), but is likely preferred by the individual. This could be a direct result of the ‘employee profile’ including considerations for family or other life style factors. Unintentional OQ is likely ‘emergent’ (i.e., unknown to the individual before applying for a job) but is mainly characterised by an unwillingness to be in a position of over-qualification. Unintentional OQ may emerge because of obstacles to ‘adequate’ employment. Obstacles may include limited job options, geographic immobility, misinformation about a job, lack of opportunities for promotion and advancement, poor job search strategies, or individual factors such as criminal history, time period since previous employment, level of education, health status, or discrimination based on age, ethnicity, or gender (Feldman, 1996). These two forms of over-qualification are therefore very distinct from one another, with unintentional OQ potentially the more distressing form.

Choosing Over-Qualification

Individuals may willingly choose employment below their qualifications for a

variety of reasons. Research conducted by Maltarich, Nyberg, and Reilly (2010) found that several high cognitive ability individuals intentionally chose to stay in low cognitive demand jobs. This was said to occur because job characteristics were desirable and allowed for a more preferable work–life balance (Maltarich et al., 2010). Similarly, Thompson, Shea, Sikora, Perrewe, and Ferris (2013) found during their work with an outplacement firm that many individuals who had demanding, high-stress careers, and who had successfully managed their money, welcomed the opportunity to work in positions which allowed for increased work-life balance. Rather than viewing their over-qualified status or underemployment as a career impediment, these individuals considered the change a welcome trade off (Thompson et al., 2013).

Career paths are changing and becoming more customised and, many individuals are now working a ‘reduced-load’ job. This term refers to a career path characterised by a reduction in work hours and work load, as well as a proportional cut in pay (Lee, Kossek, Hall, & Litrico, 2011). Reduced load work “is undertaken to facilitate sustaining a career and yet having time for personal and family life” (Lee et al., 2011, p.1535). Although no direct research has been conducted on this customised career path and over-qualification, it could be presumed that many who pursue reduced-load careers are somewhat over-qualified. This is because research has found many well-educated professionals opt for this career path at some stage during their later life (Lee, MacDermid, Williams, Buck & Leiba-O’Sullivan, 2002; Lee et al., 2011).

Individuals who place lower salience (personal importance) on their work, as compared to their nonwork roles, may choose to enter positions for which they

are over-qualified in order to have more time for their family and other personal endeavours (Perrewe, Halbesleben, Rosen & Ebrary, 2012, p. 17).

Intentional OQ may be an attempt to secure employment with low cognitive and time demands in order to focus on one's family (Erdogan et al., 2011a; Thompson et al., 2013). Students may seek similar employment conditions in order to focus on their studies (Erdogan et al., 2011a; Thompson et al., 2013). Another potential reason for choosing employment below one's qualifications could be personal health issues, where intentional OQ is an attempt to reduce role strain and focus on one's health. An additional reason could be reduced self-efficacy at work, where intentional OQ is an attempt to choose employment one believes they can successfully manage. Securing employment below one's qualifications could also be an attempt to use a job as a stepping stone to a better job in the future. Recent graduates may choose internships they are over-qualified for to build social capital and gain industry-specific expertise (Feldman & Maynard, 2011).

Another key reason individuals may choose employment below their qualifications is if they want part-time work rather than full-time work, as intentional OQ could be an attempt to reduce the demands on one's time. Maynard, Thorsteinson, and Parfyonova (2006) found that different life situations and preferences led individuals to intentionally seek out part-time employment. Similar preferences may also lead individuals to intentionally seek out employment below their qualifications. Reasons include: wanting to earn additional income, wanting to explore a new career, taking the opportunity to apply one's expertise to a different type of work, wanting more time for leisure activities and hobbies, or wanting less responsibility and stress (Maynard, Thorstein, & Parfyonova, 2006). Lastly, individuals may intentionally

choose employment below their qualifications if they are close to retirement, particularly because work-life balance becomes more important to older workers than do opportunities for promotion or advancement (Shultz, Olson, & Wang, 2011). In summary, there may be several possible combinations of reasons why individuals willingly choose jobs below their qualifications, as employment decisions are based on satisfying a number of different needs within various domains of life (Maltarich, Reilly & Nyberg, 2011).

Theoretical Model

Although a lot of past research has found over-qualification is related to a variety of undesirable outcomes, one major limitation of over-qualification research is the lack of an organising theoretical framework with which to explain findings (Feldman, 1996; Fernandes, 2016; Maynard, Thorstein, & Parfyonova, 2006).

Theoretical frameworks most often used to explain the outcomes of perceived over-qualification and the processes which drive these outcomes are equity theory (Adams, 1965), relative deprivation theory (Crosby, 1984), goal setting theory (Bashshur, Hernandez, & Peiro, 2011), and organisational justice theory (Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001). However, very few studies have empirically examined these theories as underlying mechanisms (mediators) or boundary conditions (moderators), thus direct research support is limited (Fernandes, 2016; Maynard, Thorstein, & Parfyonova, 2006), for these reasons the above theories are not discussed in the present study. Instead, the person-job fit framework by Edwards (1991) is used to provide a theoretical base for making hypotheses about the outcomes of intentional, unintentional, and non-OQ. The person job fit framework was chosen because in an empirical study, Luksyte, Spitzmueller, and Maynard (2011) found it to be an

important mechanism in the relationship between over-qualification and outcomes, confirming it is a full mediator.

There are two types of person-job fit: demands-abilities fit and needs-supplies fit (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005). Demand-abilities fit is characterised as the compatibility between employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) and their formal job requirements (Cable & DeRue, 2002; Edwards, Cable, Williamson, Lambert, Shipp, 2006; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Demand-abilities fit is closely related to over-qualification because the KSAs of over-qualified individuals do not often match their job demands or work environment. This mismatch has been proposed to mediate negative outcomes such as job dissatisfaction, as being dissimilar to one's working environment is considered an unpleasant experience (Edwards et al., 2006; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Liu, Luksyte, Zhou, Shi, & Wang, 2015). However, Luksyte, Spitzmueller, and Maynard (2011) found that regardless of demand-abilities misfit, over-qualification was only related to undesirable outcomes when needs-supplies misfit occurred. Moreover, "over-qualified incumbents form their P-E fit perceptions based on how well the organisation fulfils their needs, not on the match between their abilities and job demands" (Luksyte et al., 2011, p. 291).

Needs-supplies fit is a form of complementary fit and captures how well the work environment fulfils individuals' needs, desires, and preferences (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman & Johnson, 2005). Job supplies are general characteristics or job attributes (Werbel & Johnson, 2001) such as recognition, promotion, advancement, autonomy, and performance feedback (Kristof, 1996). Job supplies play a large role in determining whether employee's needs are satisfied by their job or not (Kristof, 1996; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Werbel & Johnson, 2001).

Like most job seekers, individuals who do not choose to be over-qualified initially select employment based on their personal preferences and needs (Luksyte et al., 2011). An individual who prefers, desires, or needs their job to fully utilise their qualifications will develop perceptions of over-qualification and experience needs-supplies misfit if this does not happen (Luksyte et al., 2011). Luksyte and colleagues (2011) found that needs-supplies misfit among over-qualified employees instigates a host of negative emotions including anger, frustration, disappointment, and cynicism about the meaningfulness of their work. Moreover, this misfit can leave the individual feeling disillusioned with the job, frustrated with the lack of career opportunities, and unfulfilled due to underutilisation (Luksyte et al., 2011). Given that over-qualification as defined by Luksyte and colleagues (2011) is similar to the definition of unintentional OQ, needs-supplies fit may be useful in theoretically explaining why not choosing to be over-qualified, but ending up in a position of over-qualification, relates to undesirable outcomes.

From a theoretical perspective, the needs-supplies fit framework may also prove useful in explaining the relationship between intentional OQ and outcomes. Choosing to be over-qualified may not relate to outcomes in the same way that unintentional OQ does. This may be because the needs of intentionally over-qualified individuals are likely to be very different, and more explicit, than the needs of unintentionally over-qualified individuals.

Those who are driven to choose jobs below their qualifications will be motivated to pursue jobs based on whether they believe a job has characteristics or job supplies that will accommodate their non-work needs, desires, and preferences. Thus, intentionally over-qualified individuals may be much more aware of the job supplies

they require during the selection process. This knowledge and subsequent selection practice may enhance one's chance of obtaining needs-supplies fit within their chosen job. Obtaining needs-supplies fit is an ideal situation given that, in the presence of needs-supplies fit, over-qualification is not related to undesirable outcomes (Luksyte et al., 2011).

A major antecedent of needs-supplies fit is employee selection practices (Werbel & Johnson, 2001). An example of a selection process that could enhance an intentionally over-qualified individual's chance of obtaining needs-supplies fit within their job may be: 1) realizing that additional time for university and leisure activities is required, 2) determining that to achieve this, a job offering part-time hours, flexibility, and job autonomy is required, 3) a job is pursued and accepted based on the belief it has those specific job supplies/job characteristics, 4) employment in that job provides autonomy and a flexible work schedule, 5) these job supplies allow more time for university and leisure activities, and 6) the employee's needs are met both in work and outside of work.

Maynard, Joseph, and Maynard (2006) state that negative effects of over-qualification only occur when there is a mismatch between the needs of an employee and the characteristics of their position. Thus, negative work attitudes such as job dissatisfaction or low affective organisational commitment may not always be outcomes of over-qualification if it is intentional. Moreover, the absence of negative attitudes may result in the absence of negative behaviour, as "attitudes toward a given object will generally result in behaviours that are consistent with those attitudes" (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005, p. 289).

Maynard and colleagues (2006) found that different life situations and preferences lead individuals to intentionally seek out part-time employment (e.g., being a student, caring for relatives, wanting more time for other things), and that these motivations affect their work experiences. Employees who intentionally chose their part-time job status had greater job satisfaction and affective and normative commitment than employees who did not choose their part-time job status (Maynard et al., 2006). Intentional (voluntary) part-time employees also had significantly lower turnover intentions than unintentional (involuntary) part-time employees (Maynard et al., 2006).

In a longitudinal study, Maltarich, Nyberg, and Reilly (2010) found that high cognitive ability individuals in low cognitive demand jobs did not leave their organisation or turnover frequently. Similarly, Johnson, Kawachi, and Lewis (2009) found that employees over 50 years of age who were re-employed in positions they were over-qualified for reported increased job satisfaction. Despite being over-qualified, their new jobs were less stressful and more flexible, resulting in increased enjoyment at work (Johnson et al., 2009).

Individuals who work a 'reduced-load' job in order to sustain a career and have time for personal and family life have been found to exhibit high levels of job performance, job satisfaction, and personal well-being (Lee, Hourquet, & MacDermid, 2002; Lee, MacDermid, Williams, Buck, & Leibia-O'Sullivan, 2002). Most individuals who opt for reduced-load work arrangements also feel satisfied with the likely career implications this choice has (Lee, MacDermid, Williams, Buck, & Leibia-O'Sullivan, 2002). Although some anticipate this employment decision will slow down upward progress, many feel good about being able to place high priority on the quality

of their family and personal lives, while also maintaining a career (Lee, MacDermid, Williams, Buck, & Leibia-O'Sullivan, 2002).

From a theoretical perspective, the needs-supplies fit framework may also prove useful in explaining the relationship between non-OQ and outcomes. Not being over-qualified is unlikely to be associated with the typical negative outcomes of over-qualification. If employees do not perceive themselves as over-qualified, their work environment must already be satisfying several of their needs. For example, perceptions of over-qualification can develop in the presence of demand-abilities mismatch (Liu, Luksyte, Zhou, Shi, & Wang, 2015); inadequate economic and social rewards for invested human capital (McKee-Ryan & Harvey, 2011); unfair outcomes/rewards relating to distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational injustice (Bashshur, Ramsay, Hernandez, & Peiro, 2011; Colquitt et al, 2001; Crosby, 1976; Feldman, Leana, & Bolino, 2002; Fernandes, 2016), and perceptions of relative deprivation resulting from inadequate job supplies (Fernandes, 2016). Thus, employees who do not perceive themselves as over-qualified must, to a degree, evaluate their work environment and their job supplies (e.g., fairness, recognition, advancement, challenging work, opportunities, financial rewards) as adequate. This claim is partially supported by Luksyte and colleagues (2011) who found that needs-supplies fit is higher among those who are not over-qualified. These individuals may therefore avoid the negative outcomes often associated with over-qualification.

The subsequent sections of this chapter reviewed research on the suggested outcome variables: affective organisational commitment, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, turnover intentions, and job performance, and over-qualification. Hypotheses are also outlined.

Affective Organisational Commitment

Affective organisational commitment has been described as the level of emotional attachment an employee has towards their organisation (Marrow et al., 2002). High levels of affective commitment are beneficial for both employers and employees (Lobene & Meade, 2010). Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, and Topolnytsky (2002) conducted a meta-analysis to assess antecedents, correlates, and consequences of affective, continuance, and normative commitment based on Meyer and Allen's (1991) Three-Component Model. Antecedents of affective organisational commitment include perceived organisational support, organisational justice (distributive, procedural, and interactional) and transformational leadership (Meyer et al., 2002). Correlates and consequences of affective organisational commitment included higher attendance, performance, job satisfaction, and citizenship behaviour; as well as reduced work-related stress and work-family conflict (Meyer et al., 2002). Lower levels of affective organisational commitment relate strongly to cognitive withdrawal, turnover intent, and voluntary turnover (Meyer et al., 2002). Affective organisational commitment was included as an outcome variable as over-qualification has been proposed to reduce one's level of emotional attachment towards their organisation, however research on this relationship is limited. Including affective commitment as an outcome variable may help to clarify the relationship between affective organisational commitment and different forms of over-qualification.

Research on the relationship between over-qualification and affective commitment is limited (Maynard, Joseph, & Maynard, 2006). Johnson, Morrow, and Johnson (2002) found a negative relationship between over-qualification (i.e., mismatch) and affective commitment, but no relationship was found between over-

qualification and continuance or normative commitment. Feldman, Leana, and Bolino (2002), and Feldman and Turnley (1995) found consistent negative relationships between various dimensions of underemployment (over-qualification, employment in an unrelated field, and part-time work) and affective commitment. Maynard, Joseph, and Maynard (2006) found that perceived over-qualification was negatively related to affective organisational commitment.

Although Behery (2009) found person-job fit (including needs-supplies) to be positively correlated with affective organisational commitment, the relationship between over-qualification and affective organisational commitment needs further examination (Feldman et al., 2002). Unintentionally over-qualified employees have specific needs that their organisation is unable to meet (e.g., qualification utilisation, prestige, social status, rewards). When over-qualified employees have unsatisfied needs, they can react by psychologically distancing themselves from their employer (Feldman et al., 2002). This reaction consequently erodes affective organisational commitment (Fernandes, 2016; Erdogan et al., 2011; Feldman et al., 2002). The combination of high needs but low supplies should thus lead to low affective commitment among unintentionally over-qualified employees. Those who are intentionally over-qualified are presumed to have their needs better satisfied by their jobs. Non-over-qualified individuals also have their needs better satisfied by their jobs as they receive adequate economic and social rewards for their invested human capital, as well as fair outcomes/rewards relating to organisational justice. If an employee considered outcomes or rewards provided by their job inadequate, perceptions of over-qualification would develop (Bashshur et al, 2011; Colquitt et al, 2001; Feldman et al., 2002; Fernandes, 2016; McKee-Ryan & Harvey, 2011). It is therefore expected that

affective commitment will be higher for those who are non-over-qualified and intentionally over-qualified.

H1: Unintentional OQ will be related to lower affective organisational commitment than Intentional OQ, and Non-OQ

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is defined as “a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experience” (Osbourne, 2015, p. 175). Job satisfaction is related to higher job performance, life satisfaction, organisational commitment, organisational citizenship behaviour, lower absenteeism, and lower counter-productive work behaviour (Osbourne, 2015). Most over-qualification research has focused on job satisfaction (Fernandes, 2016), thus the negative effects over-qualification has on job satisfaction have been well established. Job satisfaction was included as an outcome variable to examine whether over-qualification continues to reduce satisfaction with work when it is intentional.

Over-qualification is associated with a variety of negative job attitudes, with the most common being job dissatisfaction (Cicolini, Comparcini & Simonetti, 2014; Erdogan & Bauer, 2009; Feldman et al., 2002; Maynard, Joseph, & Maynard, 2006). Specifically, dissatisfaction with pay and promotional opportunities has proven to be greater for employees who are over-qualified (Feldman et al., 2002). Johnson and Johnson (2002) conducted a longitudinal study among American postal workers and found, like many other studies, that perceived over-qualification was negatively related to job satisfaction. The researchers suggest that “the effects of perceived over-

qualification on dimensions of job satisfaction reflect work-related deprivation associated with unfulfilled needs and expectations” (Johnson & Johnson, 2000, p.551).

Needs-supplies fit has a direct relationship with job satisfaction. The greater needs-supplies misfit, the greater job dissatisfaction (Cable & Edwards, 2004; Yu, 2016). Given that over-qualified employees more often experience needs-supplies misfit (Lukseyte et al., 2011), it is expected that unintentional OQ will be related to low job dissatisfaction. Intentionally over-qualified individuals are believed to have their needs better satisfied by their jobs, therefore it is expected that these individuals appraise their jobs more positively. It is also expected that non-over-qualified individuals appraise their jobs more positively than unintentionally over-qualified individuals because they are more likely to receive adequate job supplies and rewards (Lukseyte et al., 2011).

H2: Unintentional OQ will be related to lower job satisfaction than Intentional OQ, and Non-OQ.

Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction is a component of subjective well-being and has been defined as “an overall assessment of feelings and attitudes about one’s life at a particular point in time ranging from negative to positive” (George, Chaze, Fuller-Thomson, & Brennenstuhl, 2012, p. 409). Job satisfaction, financial satisfaction, home life satisfaction, and satisfaction with esteem needs (i.e., self-esteem and freedom) are each antecedents of overall life satisfaction (George et al., 2012; Judge & Watanabe, 1993; Oishi, Diener, Lucas & Suh, 1999). Over-qualification has been proposed to reduce satisfaction with life, therefore it was included as an outcome variable. By

differentiating forms of over-qualification, the relationship between OQ and life satisfaction may become clearer.

Roh, Chang, Kim, and Nam (2014) conducted longitudinal research to investigate whether perceived over-qualification had different effects on psychological well-being and life satisfaction in comparison to unemployed individuals and the adequately employed (employees with demands-abilities match). They found that both unemployed individuals and over-qualified individuals reported lower levels of psychological well-being in terms of self-esteem and life satisfaction than adequately employed individuals (Roh et al., 2014).

Feldman and Turnley (1995) found that university graduates who experienced inadequate employment (including employment they were over-qualified for) reported lower levels of life satisfaction. It was suggested that when individuals cannot find adequate employment they experience learned helplessness, and feel as though they have decreased control over their lives. This then has a negative impact on their self-esteem and satisfaction with life (Feldman & Turnley, 1995). Kokko and Guerrier (1994) added to this explanation, stating that life dissatisfaction is a result of feeling incompetent, stuck, and controlled by external forces. Individuals who are not over-qualified by choice may indeed feel this way, as they are not receiving need-satisfying rewards from their job.

Although previous research has found that over-qualification is related to life dissatisfaction, the most common explanation behind this finding is that life dissatisfaction is a result of unmet needs, such as the need for autonomy, control, and independence (Feldman & Turnley, 1995; Kokko & Guerrier, 1994). Given that

intentional OQ is a choice, these individuals may not feel stuck, incompetent, and controlled by external forces. Moreover, these individuals may only pursue jobs offering autonomy, control, and independence (due to their work-life balance considerations). Non-over-qualified individuals are also unlikely to feel stuck, incompetent, and controlled by external forces as they were able to successfully obtain adequate employment. Moreover, adequate employment can increase job satisfaction, financial satisfaction, home life satisfaction, and satisfaction with esteem needs (i.e., self-esteem and freedom), each of which are antecedents of overall life satisfaction (George et al., 2012; Judge & Watanabe, 1993; Oishi et al., 1999). With this rationale, it is expected that unintentional OQ will be related to life dissatisfaction more than intentional OQ, and non-OQ.

H3: Unintentional OQ will be related to lower overall life satisfaction than intentional OQ, and Non-OQ.

Turnover Intentions

Turnover intent is the degree to which an individual cognitively prepares to leave or remain at their job; it is the probability of voluntarily terminating or continuing with their employment (Maynard, Thorsteinson, & Parfyonova, 2006). Turnover intention is a strong predictor of voluntary turnover (Breukelen, Rene van der Vlist, & Steensma, 2004). The consequences of voluntary turnover on organisations include financial cost, jeopardised customer relations, lost human capital, disruption of efficiency, decreases in morale, and reduced organisational performance over the short-term (Wells & Welty Peachy, 2011). Organisational commitment has been found to mediate turnover intentions (Meyer et al., 2002; Wells & Welty Peachy, 2011), while job satisfaction has been found to successfully reduce

turnover intentions among over-qualified individuals (Erdogan & Bauer, 2009; Maynard & Pafyonova, 2013). Turnover intent was included as an outcome variable as over-qualification has been proposed to increase employees' intention to quit, however research on this relationship is limited. By differentiating forms of over-qualification, the relationship between OQ and turnover intent may become clearer.

Over-qualification has been associated with greater job-searching behaviour and turnover intentions (Feldman et al., 2002; Leana & Feldman, 1995; Maynard & Parfyonova, 2013; Maynard et al., 2006). Maynard and Parfyonova (2013) found that job searching behaviour and turnover intentions were more common among ambitious employees who desired their jobs to take advantage of their skills and qualifications. Maynard and Pafyonova (2013) concluded that being over-qualified is stressful for ambitious individuals who desire/need their qualifications to be fully utilised. Thus, actively engaging in job searching behaviour is an attempt to reduce the stress associated with inadequate employment (Leana & Feldman, 1995). Feldman and Turnley (1995) found similar results, suggesting that job searching behaviour and real voluntary turnover is a function of problem focused coping. Individuals who are not over-qualified by choice may indeed feel that they are not receiving what they need, or desire from their job (needs-supplies misfit). Their employment situation may thus be perceived as a significant stressor, promoting job searching behaviour and voluntary turnover.

Intentionally over-qualified individuals are unlikely to perceive their employment situation as a significant stressor due to underutilised qualifications, particularly if the jobs chosen by these individuals are less complex and allow more time for non-work commitments. Non-over-qualified individuals are also unlikely to

perceive their employment situation as a significant stressor, as identifying oneself as ‘not over-qualified’ means job supplies, outcomes, and rewards must be considered reasonable and fair by that employee’s standards. For these reasons, unintentional OQ is likely related to stronger turnover intentions than intentional OQ, and non-OQ.

H4: Unintentional OQ will be related to stronger turnover intentions than Intentional OQ, and Non-OQ.

Job Performance

Job performance is a multi-dimensional concept and has been distinguished as either contextual, tasks, or overall performance (Sonnentag, Volmer, & Spychaia, 2008). Contextual performance is behaviour that does not directly contribute to organisational performance but supports the organisational, social, and psychological environment of the organisation (Sonnentag et al., 2008). Task performance is the completion of tasks that directly relate to one’s job description and directly contribute to the organisations performance, and overall job performance is a combination of contextual and task performance (Sonnentag et al., 2008). The best predictor of job performance is general mental ability (Schmidt, Hunter, & Eisenberg, 1998). Job performance was included as an outcome variable because its relationship with over-qualification has produced the most conflicting patterns of results in over-qualification research to date. Because of this, researchers have struggled to establish a valid explanation for findings. By differentiating forms of over-qualification, the relationship between over-qualification and job performance may become clearer.

If perceived over-qualification reflects objective reality then over-qualified employees would have the prerequisite resources required to perform well, such as

increased ability, skill, and/or underutilised time and effort. However, not all over-qualified employees perform to their capabilities. Research regarding the relationship between over-qualification and job performance is mixed.

In a sample of expatriates, Bolino and Feldman (2000) found that over-qualified individuals did not perform to their full potential. However, in a study involving retail workers, Erdogan and Bauer (2009) found that employees who identified as over-qualified performed better in terms of sales figures. Initially, the researchers believed that empowerment moderated the relationship between over-qualification and job performance. However, this hypothesis was unsupported, as over-qualified employees demonstrated higher levels of performance regardless of their empowerment levels (Erdogan & Bauer, 2009); no alternative explanation was provided for this finding. In a similar study, Fine and Nevo (2008) found that employees considered cognitively over-qualified (having a higher level of cognitive ability than required for their job) were rated by their supervisors as higher performers than adequately qualified employees (employees with demands-abilities match). Fine and Nevo (2008) explained their findings by stating that “the results can be understood intuitively. After all, the operational definition of cognitive overqualification is ostensibly a measure of cognitive ability itself, which is an inherently positive and monotonic predictor” (p. 354).

One explanation for the mixed results concerning over-qualification and job performance is that when over-qualified employees make sustained job contributions and perform ‘above average’, they expect to be rewarded by having their needs satisfied (needs-supplies fit) through recognition, pay, prestige, rewards, and security (Yu, 2016). Negative implications, such as reduced performance, ensue when

individuals do not receive need-satisfying rewards from their employer (Luksyte et al., 2011; Yu, 2016). Luksyte et al (2011) found that when over-qualified individuals do not receive need-satisfying rewards, they engage in increased counter-productive work behaviour and therefore reduce their performance (Luksyte et al., 2011). Given that unintentional OQ is inherently associated with unsatisfying rewards/job supplies, it is expected that individuals who do not choose to be over-qualified will reduce their effort and performance. Individuals who are intentionally over-qualified and non-over-qualified are more likely to receive job supplies they desire (e.g., autonomy or challenging tasks), therefore eliminating a key reason to reduce their performance at work (Luksyte et al., 2011). With this rationale, it is expected that unintentional OQ will be related to lower self-rated job performance than intentional OQ, and non-OQ.

H5: Unintentional OQ will be related to lower self-rated job performance than Intentional OQ, and Non-OQ.

The subsequent sections of this chapter include reviewed research on potential predictor variables of intentional over-qualification. Variables include employment status (hours worked per week), age, and gender. Hypotheses are also outlined in the following sections of this chapter.

Hours Worked Per Week (part-time vs. full-time)

Part-time work is typically defined as working fewer than 30 hours per week, while full-time work is working 30 or more hours per week (Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment, 2014). This was a variable of interest in the present study as it has not previously been researched in relation to intentional and

unintentional OQ, therefore including hours worked per week has the potential to offer a deeper understanding of these distinct forms of over-qualification.

Over-qualification is particularly prevalent among part-time workers (Connelly, Wilkin, & Gallagher, 2011). The Bureau of Labour Statistics (2015) estimated that, during March 2015, a total of 6.7 million workers were employed in involuntary part-time work due to limited employment options within the United States. Additionally, OECD Publishing (2013) examined employment data across fifteen OECD countries and found that seven out of fifteen countries, including Belgium, Canada, Chile, Italy, Poland, Spain and Sweden, reported that over fifty percent of their part-time employees were experiencing involuntary part-time employment.

To date, there has been no examination of intentional and unintentional over-qualification, thus it is difficult to determine whether differences exist in terms of employment status (part-time vs full-time). Despite this, it is expected that intentional OQ will be related to part-time work, more so than unintentional OQ. This hypothesis is based on the expectation that individuals choose employment below their qualifications due to work-life balance considerations, or to balance competing demands outside of work (Pedulla, 2016). When attempting to balance competing demands outside of work, part-time work and temporary agency work can seem more appealing (Pedulla, 2016). This is because working part-time time in a position one is over-qualified for can seem superior to unemployment, it signals that an individual is motivated to work and maintain some level of skill (Pedulla, 2016). Part-time work not only provides a source of income, and allows an individual to stay active in the

workforce, it can also allow more time for non-work commitments and interests. For these reasons, it is expected intentionally over-qualified individuals will often work in part-time jobs.

H6: Intentionally over-qualified employees will work fewer hours per week than unintentionally over-qualified employees, and non-over-qualified employees.

Age

In the United States, the Federal Reserve Board's Division of Consumer and Community Affairs (DCCA) conducted a survey regarding the employment perspectives of 2,097 individuals aged between 18-30 years. Of those 18-30-year old's, 28% said they were over-qualified for their job. Although the majority of these individuals held a bachelor's degree, they often faced barriers to adequate employment. Unsurprisingly, those affected most by the 'surplus education' dimension of over-qualification are recent graduates and younger individuals (Battu, Belfield, & Sloane, 2000; Di Pietro & Urwin, 2006).

Although research regarding the extent of intentional/unintentional over-qualification by age is scarce, it is expected that younger individuals will often be over-qualified (both intentionally and unintentionally). This is based on the belief that younger individuals (25 years and below) face increased barriers to adequate employment, and often choose jobs below their qualifications. Younger individuals may more often choose jobs below their qualifications if the jobs have low cognitive and time demands. This would allow individuals 25 years and younger more time to focus on education, travel, and leisure activities. Individuals older than 25 years are likely to have different priorities, and prefer employment that is adequately matched to

their qualifications. Age was a variable of interest in the present study as it has not previously been researched in relation to intentional and unintentional OQ, therefore its inclusion has the potential to offer a deeper understanding of these distinct forms of over-qualification.

H7: Intentional OQ and Unintentional OQ will be more prevalent among younger individuals than Non-OQ.

Gender

Many researchers believe that within the workforce women are over-qualified more often than men, in terms of both perceived and objectively measured over-qualification (Feldman, 1996; Liu & Wang, 2012); however, research findings are mixed. Because research on gender and over-qualification is limited, and has produced conflicting patterns of results, gender was included as a variable in the present study. By differentiating forms of over-qualification, the relationship between over-qualification and gender may become clearer. Gender was also included to examine whether female gender is predictive of intentional OQ.

Johnson and Johnson (2000), and Luksyte and Spitzmueller (2011) found a near-zero correlation between gender and perceived over-qualification. However, two other empirical studies found that male employees perceived higher levels of over-qualification than did their female colleagues (Erdogan & Bauer, 2009; Maynard et al., 2006). No research has examined whether gender differences exist in relation to intentional versus unintentional over-qualification. Because it is believed that intentional OQ is strongly related to part-time work, it is expected that women will choose to be intentionally over-qualified more than men. This is because women have

historically been expected to consider their domestic responsibilities more than men, are more conscious of work-life balance considerations, and make up most part-time and temporary workers (Tomlinson, 2006).

Part-time work and temporary work have often been categorised as ‘feminised’ types of work (Pedulla, 2016). Moreover, many mothers who work in part-time jobs are over-qualified for those jobs (Tomlinson, 2006). Part-time jobs “have historically been viewed as part of the ‘mummy track’, an employment option for women attempting to balance the ‘competing devotions’ of work and family life” (Pedulla, 2016, p. 268). Pedulla (2016) references the Bureau of Labour Statistics who cite that women in the U.S now make up nearly seventy-five percent of all part-time workers between the ages of 25 and 54. It is unclear as to how many of these women are intentionally over-qualified as to balance ‘competing demands outside of work’, but it has been suggested that women make strategic, reactive, and compromised employment choices when attempting to reconcile work and family life (Tomlinson, 2006). For this reason, it is expected that that intentional OQ will be more prevalent among women than men.

H8: Intentional over-qualification will be more prevalent among women than men.

Summary of Key Issues

In summary, over-qualification is a growing phenomenon that affects a range of diverse populations. There is concern that over-qualification negatively impacts individuals, reducing satisfaction with work and life. Moreover, many employers are concerned that hiring over-qualified individuals will result in reduced organisational effectiveness and increased costs. These concerns are premised on the widespread

belief that over-qualified employees become uncommitted, reduce their performance, and quickly develop intentions to quit. However, research directly linking over-qualification to such outcomes is not only limited, but has also produced inconsistent results. In an attempt to clarify the outcomes of over-qualification, over-qualification was conceptualised as either intentional or unintentional. The aim of the present study was to investigate whether people do in fact choose jobs below their qualifications, why people choose jobs below their qualifications, whether employment status, age, or gender predict this employment decision, and if this form of over-qualification is related to different outcomes than unintentional OQ or non-OQ.

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

A quantitative survey formed the basis of this research. A survey link was sent out to University of Waikato staff, students, managers of organisations, employees, and social media users. Within this survey items were also used to identify possible reasons for intentional OQ. Anyone could complete the online survey provided they had access to the internet. Ethics approval was obtained via the University of Waikato Ethics Committee (Approval Date 30 June 2016).

Participants

Because the survey was online, it was likely accessed by a diverse range of participants. Anyone who viewed the online survey could participate both voluntarily and anonymously. Out of 250 responses, 23 responses were incomplete (less than 50% of the survey had been completed) and were discarded. Of the remaining 227 responses, 90 participants said they were intentionally over-qualified, 84 participants said they were unintentionally over-qualified and 53 participants said they were not over-qualified. The average age of participants was 32 years 2 months, with a range of 18 to 66 years. Of the 227 participants, 61% were female and 39% were male. In terms of employment status, 69.2% were employed permanently, 20.3% were employed casually, and 10.5% were employed fixed term/temporary. On average, participants had worked in their job for 2 years 8 months, and worked an average of 35 hours per week. In terms of education level, 17.1% had high school/NCEA, 16.3% had a certificate/diploma, 35.7% had a bachelor degree, 8.4% had a post-graduate diploma, 6.2% had an honours degree, 12.01% had a master's degree and 4.4% had a PhD.

Participants also indicated which occupational group their job/position belonged to. Occupational groups were as follows: 28.2 % (64) Service Occupation (e.g., hospitality, cleaner, caregiver, teacher, nurse); 16.3% (37) Clerical and Administrative support (e.g., secretary, billing clerk, office supervisor); 18.5% (42) Specialised (e.g., engineer, accountant, systems analysts, lecturer); 13.7% (31) Executive/Senior manager (e.g., CEO, CFO, sales VP/manger); 12.3% (28) Sales (e.g., sales representative, retail); 4.8% (11) Technical Support (e.g., lab technician, legal assistant, computer programmer); 3.5 % (8) Operator or Labourer (e.g., assembly line worker, truck driver, construction); 2.6% (6) Precision Production and Crafts (e.g., mechanic, carpenter, machinist).

Measures

Demographics

Information was gathered on participants' gender, age, level of education, industry of employment, employment status, average hours worked per week and organisational tenure (See Appendix A).

Reasons for Intentional Over-qualification (RIOQ)

Because there is no known measure for intentional over-qualification, an 18-item measure was developed for the present study. Intentional over-qualification is defined as purposefully choosing a job a person believes they are over-qualified for. Participants were classified as intentionally over-qualified if they responded 'yes' to each of the three following three items: 1) Do you believe you are over-qualified for your current job? 2) Prior to accepting your job did you know you were over-qualified for it? 3) Were you comfortable with the idea of being over-qualified in your job, prior to accepting it? (That is, were you comfortable knowing you would not have your

education, training, and/or experience fully utilised by your job?). If participants indicated they felt over-qualified but responded ‘no’ to either of the remaining two items, they were instead classified as *unintentionally over-qualified*. Participants were instructed to complete the next section of the questionnaire if they had previously responded ‘yes’ to all three items. This ensured that the second half of the questionnaire was only completed by those who were intentionally over-qualified. Those who were intentionally over-qualified were then asked to read a list of fifteen possible reasons for intentional OQ and indicate the degree to which each potential reason listed played a role in their decision to become intentionally over-qualified.

Because intentional over-qualification has not previously been researched and to date there is no known measure for it, several items used to develop the *Reasons for Intentional-over-qualification* (RIOQ) measure were taken from Maynard, Thorsteinson and Parfyonova’s (2006) *Reasons for working part-time* questionnaire. Maynard et al., (2006) developed the questionnaire in order to identify why individuals voluntarily/intentionally choose part-time work. Their research was therefore similar to the present study in that both questionnaires aimed to identify reasons behind voluntary/intentional employment situations. Maynard, Thorsteinson and Parfyonova’s (2006) questionnaire has since been used in a number of studies, and has proven to be a reliable and valid measure. However, in addition to the *Reasons for working part-time* questionnaire, a ten person focus group discussion was also conducted in order to generate discussions regarding any other potential reasons individuals may pursue and accept employment for which they are over-qualified. To score all the potential reasons generated, each person in the focus group expressed

whether they believed the potential reason was relevant. If nine of the ten group members agreed the reason was relevant (at least 90% inter-rater agreement) the item was included within the final questionnaire. The final questionnaire contained 15 items, each one describing a potential reason for intentional over-qualification. The first 10 items were taken from the '*Reasons for working part-time*' questionnaire, while the remaining 5 items were taken from the focus group. (See Appendix B)

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction was measured using a measure of facet satisfaction developed by Randall and O'Driscoll (1997). Respondents reported how satisfied they were with various aspects of their present job, such as financial rewards and workload. Facets of job satisfaction were included within the measure, plus an additional item measuring global job satisfaction. Each item had a 7-point response scale ranging from 1 (*very dissatisfied*) to 7 (*very satisfied*). A total satisfaction score was obtained by taking the mean score across items, omitting the final item (My job as a whole), which was treated as a separate measure of 'global' satisfaction with the job. Facet job satisfaction produced a Cronbach's alpha of 0.89, indicating a high level of internal consistency. (See Appendix C)

Affective Organisational Commitment

The full-length Meyer and Allen commitment scale consists of 18 items, 6 items each tap affective, continuance and normative commitment (Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993). The current study utilised only the affective commitment subscale; therefore, only six items were included. Participants responded using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Three of the items in

the affective commitment scale were worded such that strong agreement actually reflected a lower level of commitment. Some of these items were reverse coded so that respondents would think about each statement more carefully; items 3, 4 and 5 were reverse scored. Following this, responses to all items within the affective commitment scale were averaged to yield an overall score. Overall scores ranged in value from 1-7, with higher scores indicating stronger affective organisational commitment. Cronbach's alpha for this measure was 0.90, indicating a high level of internal consistency. (See Appendix D)

Life Satisfaction

To measure life satisfaction, the five-item *Satisfaction with Life Scale* (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) was used. The *Satisfaction with Life Scale* (SWLS) assesses an individual's subjective evaluation of his/her life. Participants were asked to report how strongly they agreed or disagreed with certain statements (e.g., "I am satisfied with my life"). Each item had a 7-point response scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). A total life satisfaction score was obtained by taking the mean score across items. Mean scores ranged in value from 1-7, with higher scores indicating higher levels of life satisfaction. Cronbach's alpha for this measure was 0.89, indicating a high level of internal consistency. (See Appendix E)

Turnover Intentions

Turnover intentions were assessed with a 3-item measure by Adams and Beehr (1998) e.g., "I am planning to leave my job for another in the near future". Participants respond using a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). In line with Adams and Beehr's (1998) suggestion, scores were summed, with higher

scores indicating higher intentions to turnover. Scores ranged in value from 7-21 (Adams & Beehr, 1998). Cronbach's alpha for this measure was 0.93, indicating a high level of internal consistency. (See Appendix F)

Job Performance

Self-rated job performance was assessed using the World Health Organisation *Health and Performance Questionnaire* (HPQ) (Kessler, Barber, Beck, Berglund, Cleary, McKenas, Pronk, Simon, Stang, Ustun & Wang, 2003). The performance questionnaire contains three items. The first item asks, "On a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 is the worst job performance anyone could have at your job and 10 is the performance of a top worker, how would you rate the usual performance of most workers in a job similar to yours?". The second item asks, "Using the same 0-to-10 scale, how would you rate your usual job performance?". The third item asks, "Using the same 0-to-10 scale, how would you rate your overall performance on the days you worked during the past 6 months?". Although there are three items in the questionnaire, the first two items are only included to get the respondent thinking about their usual job performance and the performance of other people, so that they can provide a reasonable response to item three -the only item which is scored. Participants responded using a 10-point scale ranging from 0 (*Worst performance*) to 10 (*Best performance*). (See Appendix G)

Procedure

An online questionnaire was created using the research software *Qualtrics*. Ethics approval for this research was granted on 30th June 2016 via the University of Waikato Ethics Committee. On August 9, 2016, the University of Waikato Alumni

Association published the anonymous survey link to their social media sites (Facebook and LinkedIn) along with information about the research. Anyone with internet access could complete the survey. The survey link was shared around a range of websites and several work places (as indicated by several emails received from interested participants). However, to generate more responses emails were sent out to University of Waikato lecturers informing them of the research and asking for their support in promoting it. Five lecturers at the University of Waikato promoted the research by publishing the survey link to their students' e-learning page, 'Moodle'. In three cases, the students were offered 1% course credit for participation.

The survey link was active for eight weeks to ensure that enough time was allocated for participation (August 9, 2016 - October 4, 2016). The survey link was taken offline as soon as 250 responses were collected. The remaining 227 responses were recorded, and the data were analysed using Microsoft Excel and the software program SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Science).

Analysis

A principal axis factor analysis was run on the three-item measure of turnover intent (Adams & Beehr, 1998), the six-item measure of affective commitment (Meyer et al., 1993), and the five-item measure of life satisfaction (Diener et al., 1985). Each factor analysis revealed only one factor, and all factor loadings were high (i.e., above 0.5), therefore all items were kept. (See Appendix H)

Seven one-way ANOVA's were conducted to test hypotheses 1-7. All criterion variables were non-normally distributed with a moderate negative skew, therefore log transformations were performed. One way ANOVA's were run with transformed and

non-transformed variables; no differences were observed in the patterns of findings, and so the analyses using non-transformed variables are reported. The assumption of homogeneity of variances was tested using Levene's test of equality of variances. There were unequal numbers of participants in over-qualification groups, therefore the Tukey-Kramer post hoc test was used for group comparisons. Where the assumption of homogeneity of variance was violated, the Games-Howell post-hoc test was used.

A Chi-Square test was run to determine any gender differences, testing hypothesis 8. Post hoc analysis involved pairwise comparisons using the z-test of two proportions with a Bonferroni correction. Finally, answers provided on the *Reasons for Intentional Over-Qualification questionnaire (RIOQ)* were described and presented with descriptive statistics.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics for each criterion variable in the total sample ($n = 227$). Descriptive statistics show that the average level of life satisfaction was moderate ($M = 4.42$, $SD = 1.30$). Life satisfaction scores were non-normally distributed with a negative, platykurtic distribution. The life satisfaction scale had a high level of internal consistency, as determined by a Cronbach's alpha of 0.89. The average level of self-reported job performance was moderate to high, ($M = 7.19$, $SD = 1.50$). Job performance scores were non-normally distributed with a negative, platykurtic distribution. The average level of affective organisational commitment was moderate ($M = 3.79$, $SD = 1.58$). Affective organisational commitment scores were non-normally distributed with a positive, platykurtic distribution. The affective commitment scale had a high level of internal consistency, as determined by a Cronbach's alpha of 0.90. Average turnover intent was moderate ($M = 13.48$, $SD = 5.40$). Turnover intention scores were non-normally distributed with a negative, platykurtic distribution. The turnover intention scale had a high level of internal consistency, as determined by a Cronbach's alpha of 0.93. Average level of job satisfaction was moderate to high ($M = 4.69$, $SD = 1.70$). Job satisfaction scores were non-normally distributed with a negative, platykurtic distribution. No skew or kurtosis values exceeded the criteria indicated by Tabachnick and Fidell.

Table 1. *Descriptive statistics and reliability for criterion variables (n = 227)*

| Criterion Variable | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | Skewness | Kurtosis | Cronbach's alpha |
|-------------------------------------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|------------------|
| Life Satisfaction | 4.42 | 1.30 | -2.46 | -2.28 | 0.89 |
| Job Performance | 7.19 | 1.50 | -1.41 | -3.63 | |
| Affective Organisational Commitment | 3.79 | 1.58 | 0.30 | -2.71 | 0.90 |
| Turnover Intention | 13.48 | 5.40 | -2.09 | -3.36 | 0.93 |
| Global Job Satisfaction | 4.69 | 1.70 | -3.23 | -2.75 | |

Testing of Hypotheses

Seven one-way ANOVA's were conducted to determine if life satisfaction, job satisfaction, job performance, affective organisational commitment, turnover intention, age, and hours worked per week were different for groups with distinct forms of over-qualification (see Table 2, p. 46). Two hundred and twenty-seven participants were assigned to one of three groups: Intentional OQ ($n = 90$), Unintentional OQ ($n = 84$), and Non-OQ ($n = 53$).

Affective Organisational Commitment

The first one-way ANOVA showed that affective organisational commitment scores for Unintentional OQ ($M = 2.86$, $SD = 1.28$), Intentional OQ ($M = 4.26$, $SD = 1.56$), and Non-OQ ($M = 4.43$, $SD = 1.34$) groups were statistically different from each other, $F(2, 224) = 28.64$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.204$. Games-Howell post hoc test was used to compare group differences as the assumption of homogeneity of variances was

violated. Games-Howell post hoc analysis revealed that both the Intentional OQ group and the Non-OQ group scored significantly higher in affective organisational commitment than the Unintentional OQ group. However, the Intentional OQ group and the Non-OQ group did not differ significantly. This result supports hypothesis 1, which stated that Unintentional OQ would be related to lower affective organisational commitment than Intentional OQ, and Non-OQ.

Job Satisfaction

The second one-way ANOVA showed that the difference in job satisfaction scores for Unintentional OQ ($M = 3.62$, $SD = 1.50$), Intentional OQ ($M = 5.14$, $SD = 1.50$), and Non-OQ ($M = 5.60$, $SD = 1.40$) groups were statistically different from each other, $F(2, 224) = 36.56$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.246$. Tukey-Kramer post hoc test was used to compare group differences as the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met. Tukey-Kramer post hoc analysis revealed that both the Intentional OQ group and the Non-OQ group scored significantly higher in global job satisfaction than the Unintentional OQ group. However, the Intentional OQ group and the Non-OQ group did not differ significantly. This result supported hypothesis 2, which stated that Unintentional OQ would be related to lower job satisfaction than Intentional OQ, and Non-OQ.

Life Satisfaction

The third one-way ANOVA showed that the difference in life satisfaction scores for Unintentional OQ ($M = 3.60$, $SD = 1.20$), Intentional OQ ($M = 4.82$, $SD = 1.15$), and Non-OQ ($M = 5.04$, $SD = 1.00$) groups were statistically different from each other, $F(2, 224) = 35.80$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.242$. Tukey-Kramer post hoc analysis

revealed that both the Intentional OQ group and the Non-OQ group scored significantly higher in life satisfaction than the Unintentional OQ group. However, the Intentional OQ group and the Non-OQ group did not differ significantly. This result supports hypothesis 3, which stated that Unintentional OQ would be related to lower overall life satisfaction than Intentional OQ, and Non-OQ.

Turnover-Intention

The fourth one-way ANOVA showed that the difference in turnover intention scores for Unintentional OQ ($M = 16.14$, $SD = 4.02$), Intentional OQ ($M = 12.70$, $SD = 5.48$), and Non-OQ ($M = 10.62$, $SD = 5.35$) groups were statistically different from each other, $F(2, 224) = 22.017$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.164$. Games-Howell post hoc analysis revealed that the Unintentional OQ group scored significantly higher in turnover intention than both the Intentional OQ group and Non-OQ group. However, the Intentional OQ group and the Non-OQ group did not differ significantly. This result supports hypothesis 4, which stated that Unintentional OQ would be related to stronger turnover intentions than Intentional OQ, and Non-OQ.

Job Performance

The fifth one-way ANOVA showed that job performance scores for Unintentional OQ ($M = 6.64$, $SD = 1.70$), Intentional OQ ($M = 7.6$, $SD = 1.35$), and Non-OQ ($M = 7.33$, $SD = 1.14$) groups were statistically different from each other, $F(2, 224) = 9.905$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.081$. Games-Howell post hoc analysis revealed that both the Intentional OQ group and the Non-OQ group scored significantly higher in job performance scores than the Unintentional OQ group. However, the Intentional OQ group and the Non-OQ group did not differ significantly.

This result supports hypothesis 5, which stated that Unintentional OQ would be related to lower self-rated job performance than Intentional OQ, and Non-OQ.

Hours Worked Per Week

The sixth one-way ANOVA showed that average hours worked per week for Non-OQ ($M = 40.03$, $SD = 16.55$), Unintentional OQ ($M = 37.01$, $SD = 12.23$), and Intentional OQ ($M = 27.23$, $SD = 14.81$) groups were statistically different from each other, $F(2, 224) = 16.061$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.125$. Games-Howell post hoc analysis revealed that average hours worked per week was significantly lower for Intentional OQ than Unintentional OQ and Non-OQ. However, Unintentional OQ and Non-OQ did not differ significantly in terms of hours worked per week. This result supports hypothesis 6, which stated that Intentionally over-qualified employees would work fewer hours per week than Unintentionally over-qualified employees and Non-over-qualified employees.

Age (years)

The seventh one-way ANOVA showed that mean age for Non-OQ ($M = 35.84$, $SD = 13.84$), Unintentional OQ ($M = 31.05$, $SD = 8.97$), and Intentional OQ ($M = 29.66$, $SD = 11.36$) groups were statistically different from each other, $F(2, 224) = 5.24$, $p < .025$, $\eta^2 = 0.081$. Games-Howell post hoc analysis revealed that mean age was significantly lower for Intentional OQ than Non-OQ (supports hypothesis). However, Intentional OQ mean age did not differ significantly from Unintentional OQ mean age, and Unintentional OQ mean age did not differ significantly from Non-OQ mean age (fails to support hypothesis). This result partially support hypothesis 7, which stated that Intentional OQ and Unintentional OQ would be more prevalent among younger individuals than Non-OQ.

Gender Differences

A Chi-Square test with pairwise comparisons was run to determine gender differences in over-qualification. Of the male participants, 30% (27) were Intentionally over-qualified, 52.4% (44) were Unintentionally over-qualified, and 34% (18) were Non-over-qualified. Of the female participants, 70% (63) were Intentionally over-qualified, 47.6% (40) were Unintentionally over-qualified, and 66% (35) were Non-over-qualified; a statistically significant difference in proportions, $X^2(2, n = 227) = 9.93, p = .007$. Post hoc analysis involved pairwise comparisons using the z-test of two proportions with a Bonferroni correction. A statistically significant difference in proportions was found between Intentional over-qualification and Unintentional over-qualification ($p < .05$), and between Intentional over-qualification and Non-over-qualification ($p < .05$). Thus, there were significantly more Intentionally over-qualified women than there were Unintentionally over-qualified women and Non-over-qualified qualified women. The difference between men and women was also significant, in that there were significantly fewer Intentionally over-qualified men. This result supports hypothesis 8, which stated that Intentional over-qualification would be more prevalent among women than men.

Reasons for Intentional OQ

Descriptive statistics were obtained for potential reasons for intentional OQ. Of the 227 participants, 90 identified as intentionally over-qualified. For each potential reason listed, participants indicated whether the reason played 'no role', a 'minor role', or a 'major role' in the decision process to intentionally choose a job below their qualifications.

Wanting part-time work rather than full-time work was the most frequently reported reason for intentional OQ in the ‘major role’ category. Following this was being a student, wanting extra income, wanting more time for other things (leisure activities, family, hobbies), viewing one’s job as a stepping stone to a better job in the future, desiring less stressful work; desiring less responsibility than in one’s previous job, exploring a new career/occupation, and caring for relatives (children, parents, spouse).

Wanting more time for other things (leisure activities, family, hobbies) was the most frequently reported reason for intentional OQ in the ‘minor role’ category. Following this was viewing one’s job as a stepping stone to a better job in the future, desiring less stressful work, taking an opportunity to apply one’s expertise to a different type of work, exploring a new career, wanting to earn extra income, wanting more purpose and meaning in one’s work, desiring less responsibility than in one’s previous job, and caring for relatives (children, parents, spouse).

Overall, the most cited reasons for intentional OQ were 1) wanting to earn additional income, 2) wanting part-time work rather than full-time work, and 3) wanting more time for other things (leisure activities, family, hobbies). Of the fifteen potential reasons for intentional OQ, the least reported reasons were transitioning to retirement and personal health issues. (See Table 3)

Table 2. *Over-qualification groups by continuous variables*

| Criterion Variable | Non OQ | | Intentional OQ | | Unintentional OQ | | $F(2,224)$ | p | η^2 | Post-hoc comparisons |
|-------------------------------------|--------|-------|----------------|-------|------------------|-------|------------|-------|----------|---|
| | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | | | | |
| Life Satisfaction | 5.04 | 1 | 4.82 | 1.15 | 3.60 | 1.20 | 35.80 | 0.001 | 0.24 | Unintentional OQ < Non OQ, Intentional OQ |
| Job Performance | 7.33 | 1.14 | 7.60 | 1.35 | 6.64 | 1.70 | 9.91 | 0.001 | 0.08 | Unintentional OQ < Non OQ, Intentional OQ |
| Affective Organisational Commitment | 4.43 | 1.34 | 4.26 | 1.56 | 2.86 | 1.28 | 28.64 | 0.001 | 0.20 | Unintentional OQ < Non OQ, Intentional OQ |
| Turnover Intention | 10.62 | 5.35 | 12.70 | 5.48 | 16.14 | 4.02 | 22.02 | 0.001 | 0.16 | Unintentional OQ > Non OQ, Intentional OQ |
| Global Job Satisfaction | 5.60 | 1.40 | 5.14 | 1.50 | 3.62 | 1.50 | 36.56 | 0.001 | 0.25 | Unintentional OQ < Non OQ, Intentional OQ |
| Age | 35.85 | 13.84 | 29.66 | 11.36 | 31.05 | 8.97 | 5.24 | 0.006 | 0.08 | Intentional OQ < Non OQ, Unintentional OQ |
| Hours worked per week | 40.03 | 16.55 | 27.23 | 14.81 | 37.01 | 12.23 | 16.06 | 0.001 | 0.13 | Intentional < Non OQ, Unintentional OQ |

Note: Non-OQ ($N = 53$), Intentional OQ ($N = 90$), Unintentional OQ ($N = 84$).

Tukey-Kramer post-hoc comparisons were used for Life Satisfaction and Job satisfaction. Games-Howell post-hoc comparisons were used for Job Performance, Affective Organisational Commitment, Turnover Intention, Age, and Hours Worked Per Week

Table 3. *Potential Reasons for Intentional OQ.*

| Potential Reasons | No | | Minor | | Major | |
|---|------|------------|-------|------------|-------|------------|
| | Role | Percentage | Role | Percentage | Role | Percentage |
| I wanted part-time work, not full-time work | 30 | 33.30% | 10 | 11.10% | 50 | 55.50% |
| I am a student | 37 | 41.10% | 7 | 7.70% | 46 | 51.10% |
| I wanted to earn extra income | 26 | 28.80% | 18 | 20.00% | 46 | 51.10% |
| I wanted more time for other things (leisure activities, family, hobbies etc) | 33 | 36.60% | 29 | 32.20% | 28 | 31.10% |
| I viewed my current job as a stepping stone to a better job in the future | 41 | 45.50% | 23 | 25.50% | 26 | 28.80% |
| I desired less stressful work | 42 | 46.60% | 23 | 25.50% | 25 | 27.70% |
| I desired less responsibility than in my previous job | 54 | 60.00% | 16 | 17.70% | 20 | 22.20% |
| I am exploring a new career/occupation | 54 | 60.00% | 20 | 22.20% | 16 | 17.70% |
| I am caring for relatives (children, parents, spouse) | 63 | 70.00% | 12 | 13.30% | 15 | 16.60% |
| I wanted an opportunity to apply my expertise to a different type of work | 56 | 62.20% | 23 | 25.50% | 11 | 12.20% |
| I wanted to find more purpose and meaning in my work | 62 | 68.80% | 17 | 18.80% | 11 | 12.20% |
| I lost confidence in my ability to perform well in the profession for which I was qualified, so I changed to a job I knew I would feel capable in | 79 | 87.70% | 5 | 5.50% | 6 | 6.60% |
| I only became qualified in my profession due to external pressures (such as parents, friends, society) but I knew I never truly wanted to work in the profession for which I am now qualified | 75 | 83.30% | 11 | 12.20% | 4 | 4.40% |
| I am transitioning to retirement | 85 | 94.40% | 2 | 2.20% | 3 | 3.30% |
| Personal health issues | 80 | 88.80% | 7 | 7.70% | 3 | 3.30% |

Summary of Results

Overall, participants reported being intentionally over-qualified equally as often as unintentionally over-qualified. The one-way ANOVA'S showed significant differences in the proposed outcome variables between intentional OQ, non-OQ, and unintentional OQ. Unintentional OQ was related to lower life satisfaction, job satisfaction, affective organisational commitment, and job performance, as well as higher turnover intentions than both intentional OQ and non-OQ, showing support for the first five hypotheses. Average hours worked per week were also significantly lower for intentional OQ than unintentional OQ and non-OQ. Women were intentionally over-qualified more than they were unintentionally over-qualified and non-over-qualified. Moreover, women were intentionally over-qualified significantly more than men. These findings provide support for hypotheses 6 and 7. Those who were non-over-qualified were significantly older than intentionally over-qualified individuals, supporting hypothesis 8. However, there was no significant difference in age between those who were non-over-qualified and those who were unintentionally over-qualified, which fails to support hypothesis 8. In line with the expectations of this research, the most common reasons for intentional OQ revolved around work-life balance considerations (e.g., desiring part-time work and more time for non-work commitments and interests).

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

To date, over-qualification studies have not made a distinction between forms of over-qualification, although a handful of researchers have proposed that over-qualified individuals are a heterogeneous group, and that a distinction does exist. Following Perrewe, Halbesleben, Rosen, and Ebrary (2012), Thompson, Shea, Sikora, Perrewe, and Ferris (2013), Maltarich, Reilly, and Nyberg (2011) and Erdogan, Bauer, Peiro, and Truxillo (2011), two distinct forms of over-qualification were proposed in the present research: intentional OQ and unintentional OQ. Of the two hundred twenty-seven participants, 40% (90) said they were intentionally over-qualified and 37% (84) said they were unintentionally over-qualified. Thus, individuals were intentionally over-qualified just as often as they were unintentionally over-qualified. Contrary to popular opinion, some over-qualified individuals do intentionally choose jobs below their qualifications and are therefore not underemployed.

The findings from this research, discussed in more detail below, have important implications for employees and employers, and provide further knowledge of the differences between intentional and unintentional over-qualification. This chapter will discuss theoretical and practical implications, strengths and limitations, future research, and final conclusions from this research.

Main Findings

Consistent with findings of past research (e.g., Johnson, Morrow, & Johnson, 2002; Maynard, Joseph, & Maynard, 2006), over-qualification was associated with low levels of affective organisational commitment. However, in the present study, this

was only true for individuals who were unintentionally over-qualified. Those who were intentionally over-qualified and non-over-qualified both had moderate to high levels of affective commitment, supporting hypothesis 1. This is similar to Maynard and colleagues (2006) research which found that employees who intentionally chose their part-time job status had significantly higher organisational commitment than employees who unintentionally worked part-time.

Unintentional OQ may have been associated with lower affective organisational commitment because affective commitment has a direct relationship with needs-supplies fit (Behery, 2009). Given that unintentionally over-qualified employees have specific needs that their organisation is unable to meet (e.g., qualification utilisation, prestige, social status, rewards), they are more likely to experience needs-supplies misfit, and thus psychologically distance themselves from their employer (Feldman et al., 2002). This reaction erodes the level of emotional attachment an employee has toward their organisation (Erdogan et al., 2011; Feldman et al., 2002; Fernandes, 2016). Employees who are intentionally over-qualified are unlikely to psychologically distance themselves from their employer and reduce their level of emotional attachment, as it is presumed their needs are better satisfied by their jobs. Non-over-qualified individuals are also believed to have their needs better satisfied by their jobs as they receive adequate economic and social rewards for their invested human capital, as well as fair outcomes/rewards relating to organisational justice. This may explain why affective commitment was higher for intentional OQ and non-OQ.

High levels of affective organisational commitment relate strongly to higher

attendance, performance, job satisfaction, and citizenship behaviour (Meyer et al., 2002). Thus, contrary to previous claims, individuals who intentionally choose jobs below their qualifications may be valuable employees. However, the same cannot be said for individuals who are unintentionally over-qualified, as lower levels of affective organisational commitment relate strongly to cognitive withdrawal, turnover intent, and voluntary turnover (Meyer et al., 2002).

Several past studies have found that over-qualified employees are less satisfied with their jobs than other employees (Cicolini, Comparcini & Simonetti, 2014; Erdogan & Bauer, 2009; Maynard et al., 2006). However, in the present study, this was only true for individuals who were unintentionally over-qualified. Those who were intentionally over-qualified and non-over-qualified both had moderate to high levels of job satisfaction, supporting hypothesis 2. Past research has found that needs-supplies fit also has a direct relationship with job satisfaction, in that the greater needs-supplies misfit, the greater job dissatisfaction (Cable & Edwards, 2004; Yu, 2016). Over-qualification reduces satisfaction with work because of work-related deprivation associated with unfulfilled needs and expectations (Johnson & Johnson, 2000). This may explain why job satisfaction was low for those who desired 'adequate' employment but unwillingly ended up over-qualified.

Those who were either intentionally over-qualified or non-over-qualified may have had higher job satisfaction because they are more likely to obtain need-satisfying rewards from their job, and therefore appraise their job more positively. In a similar study, Johnson, Kawachi, and Lewis (2009) found that employees who were over-qualified after re-employment reported high levels of job satisfaction. Satisfaction was

higher than in their previous jobs because their new jobs were less stressful and more flexible, resulting in increased enjoyment at work (Johnson et al., 2009). Similarly, Maynard and colleagues (2006) found that employees who intentionally chose their part-time job status had significantly higher job satisfaction than employees who unintentionally worked part-time.

When over-qualification is a choice, it does not appear to reduce satisfaction with work. This is beneficial for both the individual and their organisation, as job satisfaction is associated with increased job performance, life satisfaction, organisational commitment, organisational citizenship behaviour, and reduced absenteeism and counter-productive work behaviour (Osbourne, 2015).

Consistent with findings of past research (e.g., Feldman & Turnley, 1995; Kokko & Guerrier, 1994; Roh, Chang, Kim, & Nam, 2014), over-qualification was associated with low levels of life satisfaction. However, in the present study, this was only true for individuals who were unintentionally over-qualified. Intentionally over-qualified and non-over-qualified individuals both had moderate to high levels of life satisfaction, supporting hypothesis 3. This may be because individuals who are not over-qualified by choice feel as though they have decreased control over their lives (Feldman & Turnley, 1995). They may also feel incompetent, stuck, and controlled by external forces (Kokko & Guerrier, 1994), subsequently eroding satisfaction with life (Feldman & Turnley, 1995). It is unlikely that non-over-qualified and intentionally over-qualified individuals feel the same.

Intentional OQ is characterised by choosing a job below one's qualifications. Because this employment situation is a choice, it is unlikely to leave the individual

feeling incompetent, stuck, and controlled by external forces. Moreover, choosing a job below one's qualifications is likely an attempt to increase satisfaction with life. By choosing a job with part-time hours, flexibility, autonomy, and a manageable workload, an individual can apply more time and energy into other domains of their life (Erdogan et al., 2011a).

Those who are non-over-qualified are more likely to receive adequate economic and social rewards from their jobs. Receiving adequate economic and social rewards can result in financial satisfaction, home life satisfaction, and satisfaction with esteem needs (i.e., self-esteem and freedom), each of which are antecedents of overall life satisfaction (George et al., 2012; Judge & Watanabe, 1993; Oishi et al., 1999). Moreover, intentional OQ and non-OQ may have been related to higher levels of life satisfaction than unintentional OQ because job satisfaction, an antecedent of life satisfaction, was significantly higher for intentionally and non-over-qualified individuals (George et al., 2012; Judge & Watanabe, 1993; Oishi et al., 1999).

Consistent with findings of past research (e.g., (Feldman et al., 2002; Leana & Feldman, 1995; Maynard & Parfyonova, 2013; Maynard et al., 2006), over-qualification was associated with high turnover intentions. However, in the present study, this was only true for individuals who were unintentionally over-qualified. Those who were intentionally over-qualified or non-over-qualified both had moderate to low intentions to turnover, supporting hypothesis 4. This suggests that individuals who are not over-qualified by choice do not receive need-satisfying rewards from their job, and therefore view their employment situation as a significant stressor. Actively engaging in job search behaviour can be an attempt to reduce the stress associated

with inadequate employment (Leana & Feldman, 1995). It is unlikely that non-over-qualified and intentionally over-qualified individuals perceive their employment situation as a significant stressor due to underutilised qualifications. This may explain why these individuals did not report strong intentions to turnover.

In a similar study, Maltarich, Nyberg, and Reilly (2010) found that high cognitive ability individuals in low cognitive demand jobs did not leave their organisation or turnover frequently. Moreover, Maynard and colleagues (2006) found that employees who intentionally chose their part-time job status had significantly lower turnover intentions than employees who unintentionally worked part-time. Thus, regardless of one's knowledge, skills, experience, and qualifications, strong intentions to turnover seem to only emerge when employees are unsatisfied with their work arrangement.

Unintentional OQ may have also related to higher turnover intentions than intentional OQ and non-OQ because low organisational commitment increases intent to turnover (Meyer et al., 2002; Wells & Welty Peachy, 2011). Affective organisational commitment was significantly lower for those who were unintentionally over-qualified. Although job satisfaction reduces turnover intent (Erdogan & Bauer, 2009; Maynard & Pafyonova, 2013), job satisfaction was also significantly lower for those who were unintentionally over-qualified. Together, these findings confirm that unintentional OQ is an undesirable employment situation. If unintentional OQ leads to real voluntary turnover as past research suggests, this could create financial cost, jeopardised customer relations, lost human capital, and disruption of efficiency for organisations (Wells & Welty Peachy, 2011).

Research on over-qualification and job performance has produced the most conflicting patterns of results in over-qualification research to date (e.g., Bolino & Feldman, 2000; Erdogan & Bauer, 2009; Fine & Nevo, 2008). The present research found that those who were intentionally over-qualified and non-over-qualified rated their overall job performance higher than those who were unintentionally over-qualified, supporting hypothesis 5. It has been suggested that if perceived over-qualification reflects objective reality then over-qualified employees would have the prerequisite resources required to perform well, such as increased ability, skill, and/or underutilised time and effort, therefore mediating an increase in job performance (Bolino & Feldman, 2000; Erdogan & Bauer, 2009; Fine & Nevo, 2008). However, when over-qualified employees make sustained job contributions and perform ‘above average’, they expect to be rewarded by having their needs satisfied through recognition, pay, prestige, rewards, and security (Yu, 2016). Unintentionally over-qualified individuals may have rated their overall job performance as ‘average’ because they do not receive need-satisfying rewards from their employer. Intentionally over-qualified and non-over-qualified individuals may have rated their overall job performance as better (i.e., good-excellent) because levels of affective commitment and job satisfaction were higher, and their employment situation better satisfies their needs.

Within the present study, unintentional OQ related to a range of undesirable outcomes, these outcomes are consistent with findings from past over-qualification research. However, in contrast to past over-qualification research, intentional OQ was not related to undesirable outcomes. Instead, outcomes of intentional OQ were very similar to outcomes of non-OQ, all of which were positive. Consistent with Erdogan’s

et al., (2011a) claim, work attitudes and work behaviour are not necessarily negatively affected by over-qualification if an employee accepts or even seeks out their position.

Predictor Variables

Intentionally over-qualified individuals worked significantly fewer hours per week than unintentionally over-qualified and non-over-qualified individuals, supporting hypothesis 6. Unintentionally over-qualified individuals worked an average of 37 hours per week (full-time work). Non-over-qualified individuals worked an average of 40 hours per week (full-time work), and individuals who intentionally chose employment below their qualifications worked an average of 27 hours per week (part-time work).

In line with the expectations of this research, intentional OQ was more common among part-time workers. This may be because part-time work allows individuals more time for their non-work commitments and interests (Maynard et al., 2006). Those who are unintentionally over-qualified and non-over-qualified may not need or want part-time work, as their focus is on ‘adequate’ employment, that is employment correctly matched to their qualifications, that can offer opportunities for upward mobility within an organisation, and that can progress their career. Part-time work can limit such possibilities (Tomlinson, 2006).

Although it was hypothesized that individuals below the age of twenty-five would often choose jobs below their qualifications due to travel, leisure, family, and educational considerations/pursuits, the average age of intentionally over-qualified individuals was 29 years. This may be because more people are starting their family later in life, and are also travelling later in life (Lee et al., 2011). However, in line with

the expectations of this research, intentionally over-qualified individuals were significantly younger than those who were not over-qualified for their jobs, partially supporting hypothesis 7. Non-over-qualified individuals were, on average, 36 years old- an age not as often associated with beginning a family, taking a 'gap year' to travel, or becoming a full-time student (Hong, Fan, Palmer & Bhargava, 2005; Scott, Burns, & Cooney, 1996).

It was further hypothesized that unintentionally over-qualified individuals would be significantly younger than individuals who were not over-qualified, because younger individuals face increased barriers to 'adequate' employment, and are more often over-qualified for their jobs (Battu, Belfield, & Salone, 2000; Di Pietro & Urwin, 2006). However, this hypothesis was unsupported as unintentionally over-qualified individuals were on average 31 years old, meaning there was no real age difference between them and adequately employed individuals. It may be that individuals over the age of 31 years more often desire jobs that match their education, work skills, knowledge, abilities, experience, and other qualifications. It appears that some find this match, whereas others do not. This is likely due to a range of factors, including economic factors, organisational factors (e.g., presenting a realistic preview of the job, providing opportunities for advancement), job search strategies, and individual factors (e.g., employment history, level of education).

Despite having very similar education levels, twenty-eight percent of women chose jobs below their qualifications, whereas only twelve percent of men chose jobs below their qualifications. Of those who were intentionally over-qualified, seventy percent were women and thirty percent were men. Women therefore chose jobs below

their qualifications significantly more than men, supporting hypothesis 8. Moreover, women were intentionally over-qualified significantly more than they were unintentionally over-qualified, and non-over-qualified.

Although men desired jobs adequately matched to their education, work skills, knowledge, abilities, experience, and other qualifications more than women, there was no real gender difference between men and women who were unintentionally over-qualified. Of those who were unintentionally over-qualified, fifty-two percent were men and forty-eight percent were women. Many researchers have suggested that within the workforce women are over-qualified more often than men (Feldman, 1996; Liu & Wang, 2012). This appears to be true for intentional OQ but not for unintentional OQ. These findings may explain why past research has found conflicting patterns of results regarding over-overqualification and gender, as treating all over-qualified individuals as one homogenous group would significantly change the results. These findings suggest that women may be more predisposed to work-life balance considerations and opt for ‘reduced-load’ work arrangements, and subsequent over-qualification more often than men. These findings also support Tomlinson’s (2006) claim that women may make strategic, reactive, and compromised employment choices when attempting to reconcile work and family life.

Of the ninety (37%) intentionally over-qualified participants, 23% had high school/NCEA level education, 10% had a certificate/diploma, 33% had a bachelor degree, 11% had a post-graduate diploma, 7% had an honours degree, 12% had a master’s degree, and 4% had a PhD. Twenty-nine percent worked in service occupations e.g., hospitality, cleaner, caregiver, teacher, nurse. Twenty-two percent

worked in clerical and administrative support e.g., secretary, billing clerk, office supervisor, and eighteen percent worked in sales e.g., sales representative, retail. This suggests that intentionally over-qualified individuals choose less complex jobs, jobs that are typically in abundance, and job characteristics that can accommodate non-work considerations.

Eighty-four individuals (37%) did not choose to be over-qualified, but were nevertheless over-qualified for their jobs. Of these eighty-four unintentionally over-qualified individuals, 5% had high school/NCEA level education, 25% had a certificate/diploma, 41% had a bachelor degree, 7% had a post-graduate diploma, 6% had an honours degree, 12% had a master's degree, and 4% had a PhD. Their education levels were very similar to those who were intentionally over-qualified, as were their dominant occupational groups. Twenty-seven percent were employed in service occupations (e.g., hospitality, cleaner, caregiver, teacher, nurse), eighteen percent had specialised jobs (e.g., engineer, accountant, systems analysts, lecturer), and fourteen percent worked in clerical and administrative support (e.g., secretary, billing clerk, office supervisor). Thus, the jobs held by both intentionally and unintentionally over-qualified individuals may have similar jobs characteristics; characteristics that satisfy work-life balance considerations better than they do qualification utilisation and career advancement. This may explain why outcomes were better for intentionally over-qualified individuals than for unintentionally over-qualified individuals.

Of the fifty-three (23%) participants who were not over-qualified for their jobs, 26% had high school/NCEA level education, 13% had a certificate/diploma, 30% had

a bachelor degree, 6% had a post-graduate diploma, 6% had an honors degree, 11% had a master's degree, and 8% had a PhD. There were twice as many individuals with a PhD who were not over-qualified than there were over-qualified individuals (both intentional and unintentional). With this exception, individuals who were not over-qualified had similar education levels as both intentionally and unintentionally over-qualified individuals.

Those who were not over-qualified had an average tenure of 3.5 years, one year longer than the average tenure of intentionally and unintentionally over-qualified individuals, but not significantly different. Non-over-qualified individuals worked significantly longer during the week, with an average of 40 hours per week.

Individuals who said they were not over-qualified were also older than over-qualified individuals, with an average age of 36 years. However, the most significant difference was their dominant occupational groups. Thirty-two percent classified themselves as an executive/senior manager (e.g., CEO, CFO, sales VP/manger), twenty-eight percent worked in service occupations (e.g., hospitality, caregiver, teacher, nurse), and twenty-three percent worked in specialised jobs (e.g., engineer, accountant, systems analysts, lecturer). Executive, senior manager, and specialised jobs were not frequently held by individuals who felt over-qualified- whether that over-qualification was intentional or not. Thus, the jobs held by those who said they were not over-qualified may be inherently more challenging, and economically or socially rewarding than the jobs held by those who were over-qualified. This may explain why non-over-qualified individuals had more positive outcomes than unintentionally over-qualified individuals.

In short, intentionally choosing a job below one's qualifications, and not being over-qualified, were both related to desirable outcomes for the individual and for their organisation. Presumably, because individuals who are not over-qualified and individuals who choose to be over-qualified have work environments that adequately satisfy their needs, whether this is because the jobs held by non-over-qualified individuals are inherently more challenging and rewarding, or whether the jobs held by intentionally over-qualified individuals are inherently less challenging, providing a more rewarding work-life balance.

Reasons for Intentional OQ

Although past research has not directly examined whether individuals intentionally chose jobs below their qualifications, some researchers offered explanations as to why this phenomenon might occur. Many of the suggested reasons revolved around work life balance considerations. Fifteen reasons for intentional OQ emerged in the present research, some of those reasons played 'major roles' in the decision process to be over-qualified, while others played 'minor roles'.

The most frequently reported reason for intentional OQ was that individuals wanted part-time work rather than full-time work. Part-time work was desirable to many, even at the cost of being over-qualified. This finding may be directly related to work-life balance considerations given that part-time work allows individuals more time for their non-work commitments and interests (Maynard et al., 2006). This finding is comparable to research conducted by Lee, MacDermid, Williams, Buck, & Leiba-O'Sullivan (2002). Lee and colleagues (2002) found that despite having a reduced-load career (including part-time working hours), and despite being aware of

the implications this employment decision would have on one's upward mobility within their organisation, 71% of individuals were satisfied with this trade-off because it allowed for increased work-life balance (e.g., more time for family and leisure pursuits).

In line with the theory that individuals choose employment below their qualifications due to work-life balance considerations, the most frequently reported reason for intentional OQ in the 'minor role' category was wanting more time for other things such as leisure activities, family, and hobbies. This finding is consistent with Perrewe, Halbesleben, Rosen, and Ebrary's (2012) suggestion that individuals choose to enter positions for which they are over-qualified in order to have more time for their family and other personal endeavours.

The second most frequently reported reason for intentional OQ was being a student. Of the ninety intentionally over-qualified participants, 59% were students. Being a student played a major role in the decision process to choose a job below one's qualifications. This may be because students seek employment with low cognitive and time demands in order to focus on their education (Erdogan et al, 2011a). Reported equally as often, but only playing a 'minor' role in the decision process to work in a job below one's qualifications was 'using a job as a stepping stone to a better job in the future'. This may be because recent graduates choose internships they are over-qualified for in order to build social capital and gain industry-specific expertise (Feldman & Maynard, 2011).

Desiring less work-related stress and desiring less work-related responsibility were also two frequently reported reasons for intentional OQ. This may be because too

much work-related stress can reduce work-life balance and result in work-family conflict. Work-family conflict has been defined as “a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible so that participation in one role [home] is made more difficult by participation in another role [work]” (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985, p. 77). If having a job with a lot of responsibility causes a significant amount of stress that then carries over into one’s family domain or impedes their participation in family life, choosing a job below one’s qualifications might reconcile these incompatible role pressures. A report by Erdogan et al (2011a) offers support for this theory, Erdogan et al (2011a) states that if individuals willingly accept jobs below their qualifications with an understanding that they would have more flexibility and control over their work schedule and would have less demanding and stressful work, then over-qualification has the potential to reduce work-family conflict.

The remaining potential reasons for intentional OQ were exploring a new career/occupation, wanting an opportunity to apply one’s expertise to a different type of work, wanting more purpose and meaning in one’s work, loss of confidence/self-efficacy in one’s chosen profession, being uninterested in one’s chosen profession, personal health issues, and transitioning to retirement. These reasons related less to work-life balance considerations which may explain why they were less frequently reported reasons for intentional OQ.

Although the present study found that transitioning to retirement was not a major cause of intentional OQ, it could be that the sample in this research did not have a diverse enough age range. For example, the average age of intentionally over-

qualified individuals was 29.6 years and retirement is more often associated with older individuals (55+) (Shultz, Olson, & Wang, 2011). If the sample was more representative of these individuals, it is likely that findings would be different. For example, older individuals who are close to retirement often work in jobs they are over-qualified for, as jobs offering work-life balance become more important to older workers than jobs offering opportunities for promotion or advancement (Shultz, Olson, & Wang, 2011).

All ninety intentionally over-qualified participants in the present study indicated that there were multiple reasons for choosing jobs below their qualifications, and that of those reasons, many played ‘major roles’ in the decision process to be over-qualified. For example, some participants indicated that wanting to earn additional income, wanting part-time work, being a student, wanting more time for other things, and wanting less work-related stress and responsibly all played major roles in choosing to be over-qualified. Thus, in line with the expectations of Maltarich, Reilly and Nyberg (2011), there are several possible combinations of reasons individuals choose jobs below their qualifications.

Theoretical Implications

Despite the relatively complex nature of over-qualification, unintentional OQ produced very similar results to past over-qualification research. Thus, over-qualification is indeed related to undesirable outcomes, but only when over-qualification is not chosen by the individual, and thus represents a form of underemployment. Although past research suggests that employees who are not over-qualified for their jobs have better work-related experiences and outcomes than all

over-qualified employees, this result was not found by the present research. Non-over-qualified (i.e., adequately qualified) individuals did not have a greater emotional attachment to their organisation than individuals who chose employment below their qualifications. Non-over-qualified individuals did not report greater satisfaction with their jobs or their lives than individuals who chose employment below their qualifications. Although turnover intentions were marginally higher for individuals who chose employment below their qualifications, these individuals also had low turnover intentions and were no more likely to leave their job or voluntarily terminate their employment. Lastly, non-over-qualified individuals did not rate their overall job performance as higher than intentionally over-qualified individuals. Thus, contrary to previous claims, adequately qualified employees are not always superior to over-qualified employees.

The results of this study have theoretical implications. In comparison to a lot of organisational psychology, management and human resource topics, over-qualification has received little attention. This lack of attention has lead researchers to state that:

A one-size-fits-all approach may not explain the complicated effects of being over-qualified for different employee groups. We cannot assume the generalizability of findings regarding over-qualification from one population to another, and we need more research on different types of over-qualified employee populations. Human resource practitioners would also benefit from more specific knowledge of over-qualification for different groups of employees (Erdogan et al., 2011a, p. 266).

The present study provides some insight into how over-qualification is experienced by different employee groups, how over-qualification is not a ‘one-size-fits-all’, and how different forms of over-qualification have different outcomes, for the individual and their organisation. The greatest theoretical contribution of the present research is that it distinguishes forms of over-qualification, and by doing so, provides much-needed research and information on this vastly understudied topic.

Practical Implications

The first practical implication is that the present research findings could help employers and organisations design initiatives, tools, and actions aimed towards enhancing effective hiring and management practices of over-qualified individuals. For example, following entry into an organisation, a job design strategy is a good way to establish a practical person-job fit (Edwards et al., 2006). Job design involves activities such as developing an overview of a job, determining job characteristics, determining job-related tasks, and identifying methods for working, including working conditions (Grant, Fried, Parker, & Frese, 2010). Job design has a significant impact on an employee’s attitudes and behaviour (Grant et al., 2011).

To maximize needs-supplies fit, employees and employers should openly discuss a job design strategy that aims to satisfy the needs of the employee, whether that employee is intentionally over-qualified or not. If job applicants are unaware or misinformed about what their employment conditions will be, or if an employer does not follow through on agreements made at the time of hiring (e.g., promising a flexible work schedule, or that tasks will be relevant to one’s qualifications), then the

employment relationship will likely falter, needs will become unmet, and negative reactions/outcomes will ensue (Erdogan et al., 2011).

Although many employers believe that over-qualified job applicants should be avoided, the results of the present study suggest otherwise. Over-qualified individuals who choose their over-qualified status may be valuable resources for organisations given that they have knowledge, skills, abilities, and experience that other employees in comparable positions may not have. These individuals also perform slightly better than employees who are not over-qualified, and may not feel dissatisfied or uncommitted to their jobs. As such, employers should explicitly ask over-qualified job candidates what they wish to gain from the employment relationship during the pre-employment interview. If their needs, desires, and preferences are fair then employers should support these requests to the extent possible. Moreover, having an open conversation about the employment relationship during the pre-employment interview could help employers recognize whether the additional qualifications provided by a job candidate are relevant and beneficial to the organisation (Erdogan et al., 2011).

Lastly, if employers and organisations change the way that they view over-qualification, from a seemingly negative perception to a more positive one, then job applicants who may have been overlooked for a position may instead gain employment. This has the potential to be a significant practical implication, as over-qualification is currently a prevalent phenomenon and a significant employment barrier (Erdogan et al., 2011; Thompson et al., 2013).

Strengths and Limitations

The way in which over-qualification was measured in this study is a strength of the research. Although some researchers believe that both subjective and objective indicators should be used to measure over-qualification as perceptions may sometimes be inaccurate or fail to derive from the objective employment situation, perceptions still have a direct influence on employees' attitudes and behaviours (Zhang, Law, & Lin, 2016). Moreover, prior research has found a substantial correlation between perceived over-qualification and objectively measured over-qualification (McKee-Ryan, Virick, Prussia, Harvey, & Lilly, 2009). An individual's subjective response to over-qualification has the greatest impact.

Another strength of the present research is that no previous research has examined whether distinct forms of over-qualification exist, and if so, whether their relationships with outcome variables vary. Not only did the present study do this, but individuals who were not over-qualified were also included within the analysis. This meant that comparisons could be made between intentional and unintentional over-qualification, and the adequately employed. Findings of the present study therefore add to a significant gap in the over-qualification literature, and may provide academics with a viable research avenue in the future.

Despite the perceived strengths of this research, it is not without its limitations. Data were gathered via self-report measures (questionnaires). Although the use of questionnaires has advantages (e.g., time, convenience, absence of interview effects) questionnaires prevent the researcher from being able to prompt, probe, clarify queries, or collect additional data from participants (Bryman, 2012). Moreover, self-

report measures can be vulnerable to social desirability bias, recall bias, and rater bias. Any of these biases are likely to influence the accuracy of results (Bryman, 2012).

The present study also had a limited number of outcome variables, each of which were measured at one time point, therefore it is unclear what the short-term and long-term impacts are of both types of over-qualification- for the individual and for the organisation. Although it was suggested that needs-supplies fit was an important mechanism in the relationship between forms of over-qualification and outcome variables, this theory was not tested.

Future Research

This was preliminary research, therefore both types of over-qualification (intentional and unintentional) deserve further study. There is a need to more clearly define the two constructs and develop a valid and reliable measure for them. Because this was a cross-sectional survey design, it is also unclear what the short-term and long-term impacts were of both types of over-qualification. For this reason, future research could use a longitudinal approach.

It would also be advantageous to investigate further the relationships between both types of over-qualification and additional outcome variables. Future research could also benefit from examining the relationship between over-qualification (intentional and unintentional) and outcome variables using needs-supplies fit as a mediator. Including needs-supplies fit as a mediator would enhance our understanding of the differences in outcome variables, and may provide an empirically tested explanation for findings. Our understanding of this topic could also be enhanced if future research were to use qualitative research methods, such as focus groups or

interviews, and were to also include a measure of work-life balance (e.g., Brough, Timms, O'Driscoll, Kalliath, Siu, Sit, & Lo, 2014). Although distinguishing between different forms of over-qualification is uncommon, the present study provides preliminary evidence that this is a viable research topic; a topic that is deserving of further examination.

Conclusions

Although being over-qualified has negative outcomes for those who want their qualifications fully utilised, intentionally choosing a job below one's qualifications can offer opportunities to pursue hobbies, further education, spend time with family, and meet non-work commitments. With this reasoning, over-qualification is not always a state of deprivation, a form of underemployment, a case of needs-supplies misfit, or an undesirable employment situation. Most importantly, over-qualification is not the same for everyone. Organisations and employers need to reconsider over-qualification in a conscious and deliberate manner, as individuals who intentionally choose their over-qualified status appear to represent a largely unrecognised, underutilised, and potentially valuable resource for organisations.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Demographic Information

Please answer the following questions so that the sample in this research can be accurately described. The information you provide is anonymous.

1. Are you male or female? _____
2. How old are you? _____ years
3. How long have you been working at your current job? _____
4. On average, how many hours do you work at your current job per week?
_____ Hours per week
5. What is your highest level of education? (*please tick*)
 - ☐ High school (NCEA)
 - ☐ Certificate/diploma (trades/hairdressing/hospitality/horticulture etc)
 - ☐ Bachelor degree
 - ☐ Postgraduate diploma (This is completed following the completion of a bachelor's degree)
 - ☐ Honour's degree
 - ☐ Master's degree
 - ☐ PhD
6. Please choose the category that best describes your job. If none of the categories fits you exactly, please choose 'other' and state your job title.
 - ☐ Executive, administrator, or senior manager
(e.g., CEO, sales VP, manager)
 - ☐ Professional
(e.g., engineer, accountant, systems analyst)

- ☐ Technical support (e.g., lab technician, legal assistant, computer programmer)
- ☐ Sales (e.g., sales representative, stockbroker, retail sales)
- ☐ Clerical and administrative support
(e.g., secretary, billing clerk, office supervisor)
- ☐ Service occupation (e.g., security officer, food service/hospitality, cleaner, caregiver, support worker, teacher, nurse)
- ☐ Precision production and crafts worker
(e.g., mechanic, carpenter, machinist)
- ☐ Operator or labourer (e.g., assembly line worker, truck driver, construction worker)
- ☐ Other
Please state your job title: _____

7. What is your employment status?

- ☐ Employee/worker
- ☐ Self-employed
- ☐ Contractor

8. Please indicate whether your current employment is permanent, casual or fixed term/temporary.

- ☐ Casual
- ☐ Permanent
- ☐ Fixed term/Temporary

Appendix B

Reasons for Intentional Over-qualification (RIOQ)

1. Do you believe you are over-qualified for your current job? (e.g., do you have education, training, experience, skills, and/or abilities that are not fully utilised by your job?)
2. Before you accepted your job, did you know you were over-qualified for it?
3. Were you comfortable with the idea of being over-qualified in your job, prior to accepting it? (That is, were you comfortable knowing you would not have your education, training, and/or experience fully utilised by your job?).

(If you answered 'yes' to the last question, please complete the next section of the survey by selecting 'continue',

If you answered 'no' to the last question, or if you answered, 'I am not over-qualified' please 'skip' the next section).

Instructions: Please signify your reasons(s) for choosing to accept a job you knew you were over-qualified for. Indicate the degree to which each potential reason listed below played a role in your decision.

| Reason | No Role | Minor Role | Major Role |
|--|---------|------------|------------|
| 1. I am caring for relatives (children, parents, spouse) | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 2. I am transitioning to retirement | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 3. I am a student | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4. I wanted to earn extra income | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5. I wanted more time for other things (leisure activities, family, hobbies etc) | | | |
| 6. I wanted part-time work not full-time work | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 7. I am exploring a new career/occupation | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 8. I desired less responsibility than in my previous job | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 9. I wanted an opportunity to apply my expertise to a different type of work | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 10. Personal health issues | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 11. I view my current job as a stepping stone to a better job in the future | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 12. I desired less stressful work | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 13. I lost confidence in my ability to perform well in the profession for which I was qualified so I changed to a job I new I would feel capable in | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 14. I wanted to find more purpose and meaning in my work | | | |
| 15. I only became qualified in my profession due to external pressures (such as parents/friends/society) but I knew I never truly wanted to work in the profession for which I am now qualified | 1 | 2 | 3 |

Appendix C

Job Satisfaction

Instructions: Please select the number which best indicates how you feel about each of following aspects of your work.

- 1 = very dissatisfied
2 = moderately dissatisfied
3 = slightly dissatisfied
4 = neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
5 = slightly satisfied
6 = moderately satisfied
7 = very satisfied
N/A = not applicable to me

| Job aspect | Degree of satisfaction |
|--|------------------------|
| 1. Financial rewards (pay, fringe benefits) | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 2. My workload | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 3. Variety in my work | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 4. Amount of challenge in my job | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 5. Opportunities to use my skills and abilities | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 6. Amount of freedom to decide how to do my work | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 7. The flexibility of my working hours | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 8. My job as a whole | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |

Appendix D

Affective Organisational Commitment

Instructions: Please select the number which best indicates how you feel about each of following statements.

- 1 = strongly disagree
- 2 = disagree
- 3 = slightly disagree
- 4 = undecided
- 5 = slightly agree
- 6 = agree
- 7 = strongly agree

1. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organisation.
2. I really feel as if this organisation's problems are my own.
3. I do not feel a strong sense of "belonging" to my organisation.
4. I do not feel "emotionally attached" to this organisation.
5. I do not feel like "part of the family" at my organisation.
6. This organisation has a great deal of personal meaning for me.

Appendix E

Life Satisfaction

Instructions: Please select the number which best indicates how you feel about each of following statements.

- 7 = Strongly agree
- 6 = Agree
- 5 = Slightly agree
- 4 = Neither agree nor disagree
- 3 = Slightly disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 1 = Strongly disagree

Questions:

1. In most ways my life is close to my ideal
2. The conditions of my life are excellent
3. I am satisfied with my life
4. So far I have gotten the important things I want in life
5. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing

Appendix F

Turnover Intention

Instructions: Please select the number which best indicates how you feel about each of following statements.

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = slightly disagree

4 = undecided

5 = slightly agree

6 = agree

7 = strongly agree

1. I often think of quitting this job and finding another
2. I am planning to leave my job for another in the near future
3. I would like to quit this job and find another in the near future

Appendix G

Job Performance

1. On a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 is the worst job performance anyone could have at your job and 10 is the performance of a top worker, how would you rate the usual performance of most workers in a job similar to yours?

Worst Performance

Top performance

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. Using the same 0-to-10 scale, how would you rate your usual job performance?

Worst Performance

Top Performance

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. Using the same 0-to-10 scale, how would you rate your overall performance on the days you worked during the past 6 months?

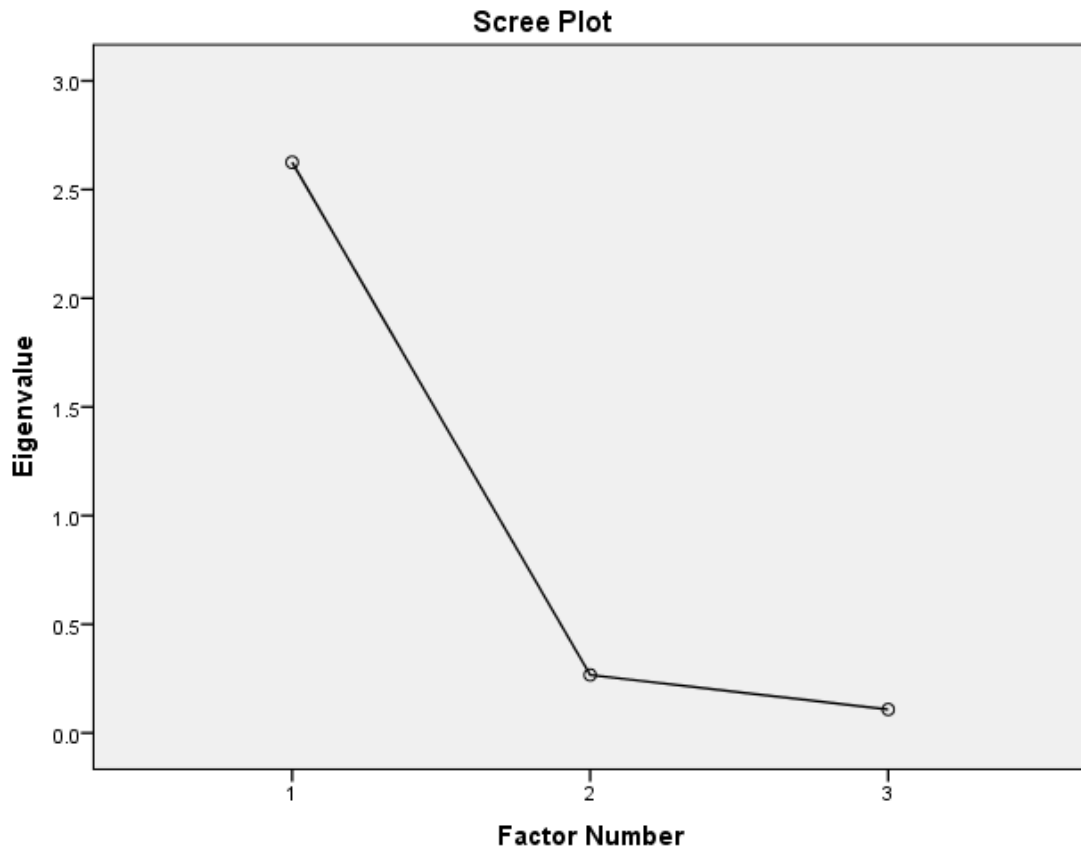
Worst Performance

Top Performance

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Appendix H

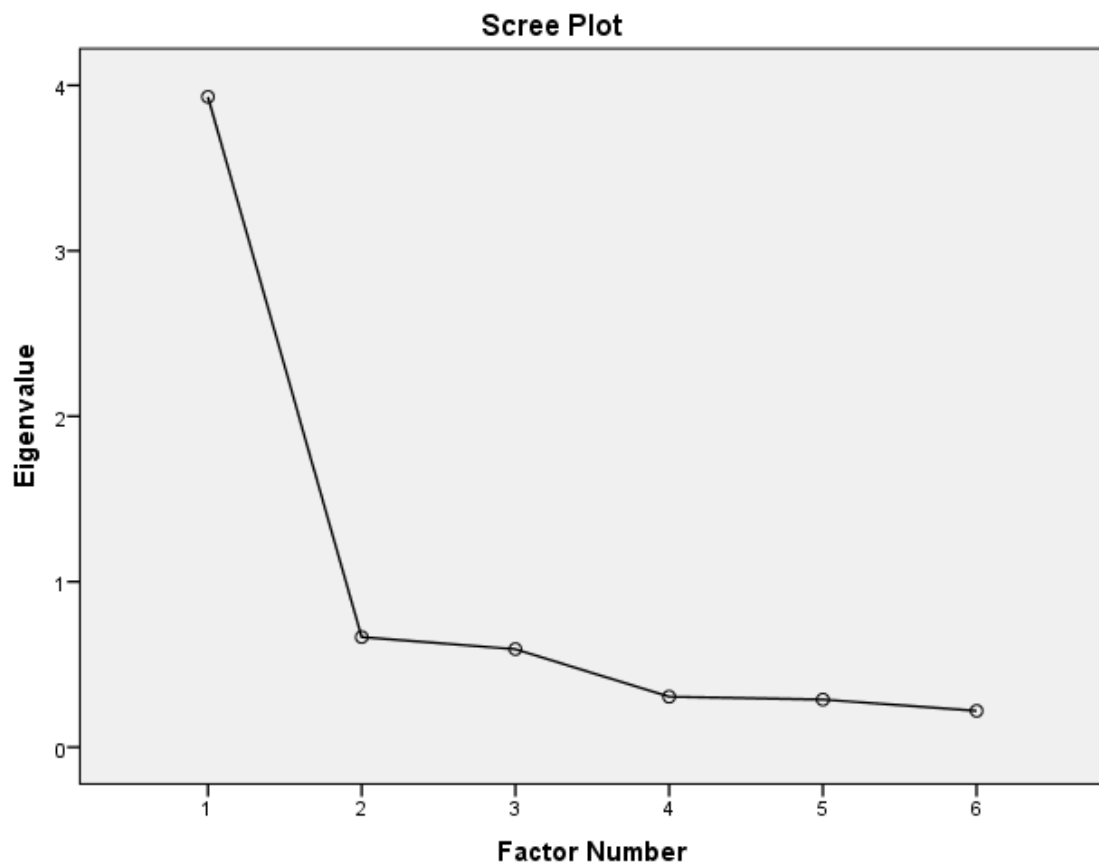
Scree Plot and Factor Matrix for Turnover Intentions



Factor Matrix^a

| | Factor |
|----|--------|
| | 1 |
| Q1 | .846 |
| Q2 | .869 |
| Q3 | .992 |

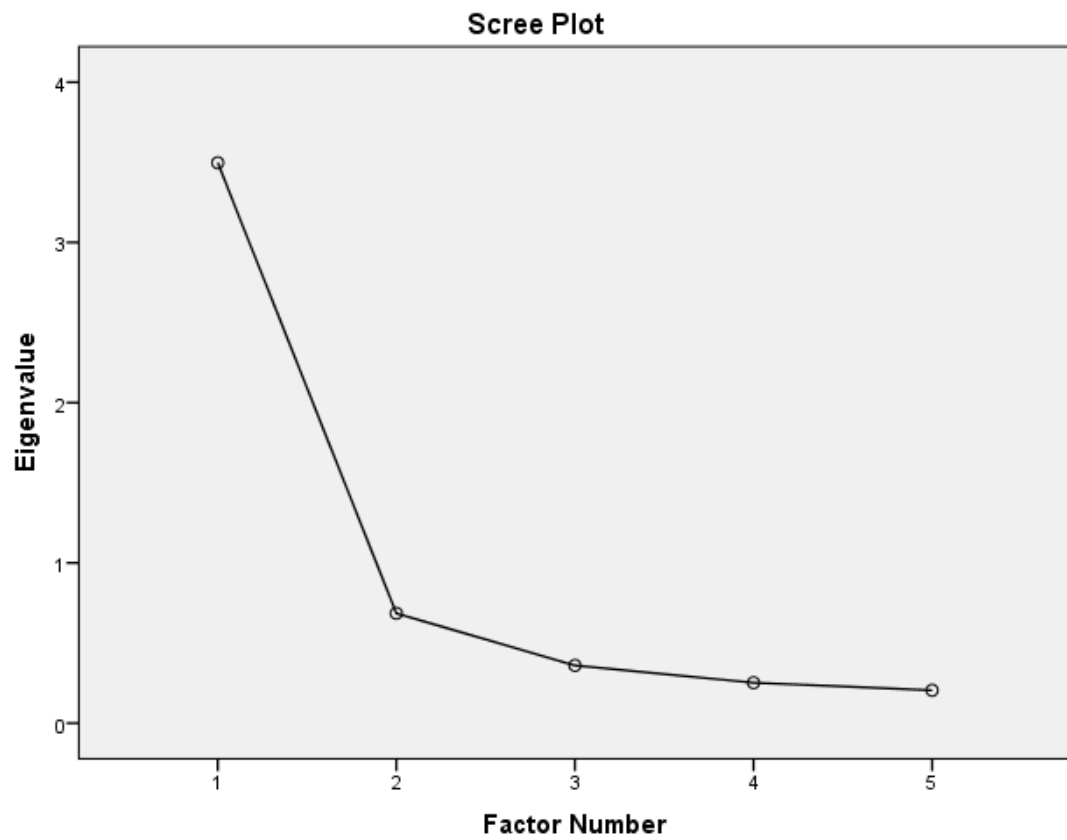
Scree Plot and Factor Matrix for Affective Organisational Commitment



Factor Matrix^a

| | Factor |
|----|--------|
| | 1 |
| Q6 | .897 |
| Q5 | .846 |
| Q4 | .842 |
| Q3 | .800 |
| Q1 | .625 |
| Q2 | .561 |

Scree Plot and Factor Matrix for Life Satisfaction



Factor Matrix^a

| | Factor |
|----|--------|
| | 1 |
| Q3 | .901 |
| Q1 | .846 |
| Q2 | .790 |
| Q4 | .773 |
| Q5 | .634 |